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LETTERS

OF

THOMAS CARLYLE

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M.M.C.57

Mrs. Carlyle.

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EARLY LETTERS

176

OF

THOMAS CARLYLE

EDITED BY

CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

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MMES

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1886

By CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

LETTERS

OF

THOMAS CARLYLE

LXXV.—To his FATHER, Mainhill.

EDINBURGH, 9 JAMAICA STREET,
17th November 1821.

MY DEAR FATHER—I was extremely glad to-day on passing along the North Bridge to see the countenance of Parliament Geordie,[1] all in the Annandale style:—not so much on his own account (for the man had little to say of importance), as because it afforded me an opportunity of writing to you, which I felt no less anxious to *do* than you to *suffer*. I could write but a very hurried and vague epistle to Sandy on the former occasion; and I was with-

[1] Dr. Little, "a clever and original" neighbour at Ecclefechan.

in an inch of missing the chance of sending even that, Garthwaite being already under way, when I met him with it in my hand. So I dare-say you will open this sheet with an additional portion of eagerness.

It struck me also that the Doctor might be a convenient means of enabling me to execute a small project which I have meditated for a while,—the project of sending my mother and you each a pair of spectacles.[1] You will find them wrapt up in the accompanying parcel. Yours I need not say are the silver ones. . . . This is the first thing, I believe, you ever got from me; and though a trifle, I know it will be acceptable as coming from such a quarter. It affords a true delight to me to think, that, perhaps I may thus add a little to

[1] "Through life I had given him [my Father] very little, having little to give: he needed little, and from me expected nothing. Thou who wouldst give, give quickly: in the grave thy loved one can receive no kindness. I once bought him a pair of silver spectacles; at receipt of which and the letter that accompanied them (John told me) he was very glad, and nigh weeping. 'What I gave I have.' He read with these spectacles till his last days, and no doubt sometimes thought of me in using them."—*Reminiscences*, i. 63.

the comfort of one, to whom I myself owe sight and life and all that makes them worth enjoying. . . .

I have almost forgot to say that if the glasses do not suit exactly;—observe merely whether you need to hold the book, or other object, *too near* or *too far* from the eye; write this down for me pointedly; and send the spectacles up to me by Garthwaite, that the fault may be remedied. They can put in a pair of new sights in five minutes, and I have bargained that it shall be no additional expense. In fact the *present sights* were put in to suit my description, and the man told me that as they grew too young, it was the custom to get them changed *regularly*. See, therefore, that you are properly fitted—since alteration can be made so easily. . . .

I designed to write Jack every night this week; but have failed. Tell him to look for a letter by the post in a day or two. Alick is in my debt: but I will have him deeper in it ere long. You must write me the very first evening you have leisure: it will be a whole-

some exercise to yourself, and a grateful treat to me.—I am ever, my dear Father, your affectionate Son,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

LXXVI.—To his MOTHER.

EDINBURGH, 9 JAMAICA STREET,
Friday night [*17th November* 1821].

MY DEAR MOTHER—Little appointed six o'clock as the hour of taking in my letters, which is just at hand: so that I have but a very few minutes to be with you; and the first of these, I must devote to beg that you will accept the *brown* pair of spectacles which I have *waled*[1] for you, and wear them for my sake. They are not nearly so good as my father's, though of the best Ladies' kind: but I will *come again* some other time. If they help you to read your book at nights, and thereby yield you any pleasure, think that it is all returned to me fourfold. They can at once be changed if they do not fit.

I felt rather low in the humour several days

[1] Chosen

after I went away. The fineness of the weather did not prevent the journey from trashing me a good deal: I felt nervous and spiritless; when I went to sleep, the picture of Mainhill and all my beloved friends there would flash across my brain so vividly and so "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought"—that I often started from my incipient slumber, and recollected with some painful feelings that I *had* changed my home and kindred for the habitation of a stranger.[1] But this soon went away:

1 "Unwearied kindness," says Carlyle, recalling the summers that he, "for cheapness' sake and health's sake," spent at Mainhill, "all that tenderest anxious affection could do, was always mine from my incomparable Mother, from my dear brothers, little clever active sisters, and from every one, brave Father, in his tacit grim way, not at all excepted. There was good talk also; with Mother at evening tea, often on theology (where I did learn at length, by judicious endeavour, to speak piously and *agreeably* to one so pious, *without* unveracity on my part, nay, it was a kind of interesting exercise to wind softly out of those anxious affectionate cavils of her dear heart on such occasions, and get real sympathy, real assent under borrowed forms). Oh, her patience with me! oh, her never-tiring love! Blessed be 'poverty' which was never indigence in any form, and which has made all that tenfold more dear and sacred to me! With my two eldest brothers also, Alick and John, who were full of ingenuous curiosity, and had (especially John) abundant intellect, there was nice talking as we roamed about the fields in *gloaming-*

and by dint of the ordinary remedies, I am now as well as when I left you. Not that I am altogether settled yet; though altogether in my usual health. I have done no work—except reading a little: and till work fairly begins you know well there is no settlement. The reasons of my wavering are various. On Saturday after Johnstone departed, I set about the weary duty of seeking lodgings all round the environs of this city,—that if possible I might secure a place provided with the requisite comforts, and situated beyond the region of smoke and tumult. After wandering little less than the shoemaker of Jerusalem did, I at length pitched upon this situation, which is a neat little room and bed-

time after their work was done. . . . All this was something, but in all this I gave more than I got, and it left a sense of isolation, of sadness; as the rest of my imprisoned life all with emphasis did. I kept daily studious, reading diligently what few books I could get, learning what was possible, German, etc. Sometimes Dr. Brewster turned me to account (on most frugal terms always) in wretched little translations, compilations, which were very welcome too, though never other than dreary. Life was all dreary, '*oury*' (Scottice), tinted with the hues of imprisonment and impossibility; hope practically not there, only obstinacy, and a grim steadfastness to strive without hope as with."—*Reminiscences*, i. 181-183.

room, at the very north-west corner of the New Town, above a mile from the centre of the Old. It is kept by a trim, little, *burring* Northumbrian, and commands a view of the Firth and the Fifeshire mountains. Being a back-room, also, I thought it would needs be quiet as possible. But it is scarcely so; there are about fifty masons chopping away at a new Circus on my right hand and on my left, by day; and when their rattling has ceased, various other noises take up their nightly tale. Now the question is, Whether shall I stand all this, and get inured to it as I certainly might, or try my luck elsewhere? Provost Swan, who greatly wishes me to be in the neighbourhood of his boy, called here the other night, and advised that I should move to Union Street or thereabouts (the North-east angle of the city), where Mrs. David Swan—a friend of his, with whom the boy is settled,—would find me out lodgings by her own experience among her neighbours. This good lady undertook the task; I am to see her this evening, when the matter will be decided; and I shall shift—if I shift at all—

to-morrow. Till to-morrow, then, I postpone the commencement of business. But *then*——!

I have troubled you, my dear Mother, with all this detail, both because I know you wish to hear of all these matters in my history, and because this circumstance will render it advisable *not* to send the little box along with Garthwaite till you hear further from me. I will write Sandy or some of them by the post, or else by the carrier—some day next week; and then it will be time enough. In the meanwhile, you will be thankful with me, that I am well, and that (as Father's letter shows) I have the rational prospect of being happy and busy all winter. How many thousands would envy my lot! I ought to be, and hope I am, contented.

The good Mrs. Swan was preaching up that doctrine to me largely yesterday, when I saw her for the second time. She seems to be a most amiable little woman, and I purpose visiting her whenever I have an opportunity. We got acquainted in about ten minutes—whenever she heard me speak about my Mother. She told me all her moving history

forthwith; how she lost the parent who had *only* nursed her; how a stepmother used her ill, and kept her six long years by various machinations from marrying a worthy honest young man who loved her well; how David and she were at length united, and lived five years together happy as unbroken affection could make them, and lastly, how she lost him suddenly a few months ago, and was left behind with an embarrassed fortune, and one little boy —for whom alone she desires to live. "But what," said the cheery little body, "are the light afflictions of this life which are but for a moment, if they work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?" I admired her fortitude and humble patience. She said I *must* return to the minister-office; lay aside vanities, be submissive, etc.; all of which things I told her you had often inculcated upon me; whereto she made answer that she wished to join with you in so good a work. I do like to see such a person; it is better than all the cold pitiful sages in the universe.

But, my dear Mother, I must away. I have

said nothing in this letter, nothing at all: I will write again very soon, and be more explicit. I cannot conclude without conjuring you to take care of yourself, during the hard task that will be allotted you during winter. O! take care. What is all the world to us without you? Go down the house *every* night, and make yourself a comfortable *dreg*.[1] You shall never, never want anything you need—if it please *Him*, who cares for us all.—Good-night, my dear Mother! I am ever yours,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

My kindest affection to all about home: to Mag and James and Mary and Jane and Jenny. *All* of them that *can* write a stroke must write to me. Sandy will write by Garthwaite—directed to Mrs. Robertson's—who knows where I am. Farewell. I will send you more news soon.

[1] *Dreg*, drain, drop = cup of tea.

LXXVII.—To his MOTHER, Mainhill.

EDINBURGH, *Wednesday evening* [*December* 1821].

MY DEAR MOTHER—I have but a few minutes to give you at present; but here is a little sovereign, which I got a while ago, and must write three words along with, ere I send it you. It is to keep the Fiend out of your Housewife (Huzzy) in these hard times, and to get little odds and ends with in due time. If I were beside you, I should have to encounter no little molestation, before I could prevail upon you to accept this most small matter: but being at the safe distance of seventy miles, I fear it not. You would tell me I am poor and have so few myself of those coins. But I am going to have plenty by and by: and if I had but one, I do not see how I could purchase more enjoyment with it, than if I shared it with you. Be not in want of anything, I entreat you, that I can possibly get for you. It would be hard indeed, if in the autumn of a life, the spring and summer of which you have spent well, in taking

care of us, *we* should know what could add to your frugal enjoyments, and not procure it. Ask me, ask me for something.

I am very busy at present, as Alick will tell you; and therefore moderately happy. If health were added.—But there is always some *if*. In fact, I ought not to complain, even on this latter score. I think I am at least *where I was*, when you saw me: perhaps better on the whole; and I hope frosty weather is coming, which will make me better still. The other day I saw one of my constant walks last summer; and I could not help accusing myself of ingratitude to the Giver of all good for the great recovery I have experienced since then.

I intend to labour as hard as possible throughout the winter, finding nothing to be so useful for me every way. I shall make occasional excursions into the country, by way of relaxation. I think of going to Kirkcaldy (whither I am bidden) for a day or two about Christmas: and I have a standing invitation, from a very excellent Mrs. Welsh, to go to

Haddington, often, as if I were going *home*. This is very *plee*sant, as Ha' bank said.

My Father is to write me next time: and what hinders Mag and Mary and James the Ploughman? I shall [be] very angry with them if they keep such silence. Tell them so, one and all. My love to Jean and Jenny: they cannot write, or they would. I long to hear of your own welfare, My dear mother, particularly of your health, which costs me many a thought. —I am always, your affectionate son,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

LXXVIII.—To ALEXANDER CARLYLE, Mainhill.

EDINBURGH, CUSINE'S LODGINGS,
5 COLLEGE STREET, 19*th December* 1821.

MY DEAR ALICK— . . . Within a few days I have set fairly to work, and am proceeding lustily; not in the whimpering, wavering, feeble, hobbling style I used; but stoutly as a man cutting *rice*[1] would wish to do. I rise between seven and eight; if I have got good sleep—well; if

[1] *Rice*, rise, brushwood.

not—well; I then seize my pen and write till the unfortunate people have cooked me a morsel of lukewarm tea for breakfast; and afterwards proceed leisurely to Great King Street in the back of the New Town, where I teach a very sparing portion of Mathematics to two young women and one young man—quiet, stupid people, with whom I spend my time till ten. Next comes a Captain of the Sea, one Anderson in George Street, not rude and boisterous like the Element he has been used to, but shrill and smooth-spoken; who gasps and burrs and repeats Euclid to me till eleven. On returning home I resume the pen and write till after two; then a walk till three; then dinner or dozing or walking or reading silly stuff or scribbling it (as now) till five, when I go to hear Peter Swan overhaul his lessons; and come back after six to write or read or do whatever I incline. This is a laborious life, but such a one as suits me, and I design persisting in it. Nothing in the world gives such scope to discontent as idleness, no matter whether forced or voluntary: a man

had better be darning stockings than doing nothing. It is also profitable as well as happy. I calculate on making a small penny this winter; of which my need is not small, as things are, and would have been indispensable, if Thrift had not lent me her aid sometimes. The work at which I am writing is *Legendre*, the Translation I spoke of. It is a *canny* job; I could earn five guineas in the week at it if I were well. I restrict myself to three,—working four hours each day. The evenings I design to devote to original composition, if I could but gather myself. I *must* do something —or die, whichever I like better. As to the latter, I have *nae wull o't*,[1] as Curly said, at all.

In this systematic division of my time, I find myself greatly impeded by the want of a proper chronometer: they have no clock in the house; and I often feel the want of one. Is the old watch at home still alive? If so, send it me. Or have you sold her, which were as well? In this case, try if by hook or by crook you can get me any *thing* to measure

[1] No inclination for it.

time with, and send it out by Farries *immediately*. I care not if it were twin brother to a potato-plum in appearance, so it will but wag, and tell me how the hour goes. I beg of you to mind this, for you cannot conceive how I am straitened for the want of the article.

Certainly this sheet has gone away by magic! I had a thousand things to ask about Cobbett, and Mainhill with its ever dear inhabitants, and Annandale, and Farries of Stonylee (*is* the poor man shot?). And see! the game is done! You will write a full sheet next time, will you not?—Your brother,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

Give my mother that note carefully. She may send the cheese, when the box goes out, if she like. *Make pens* for my many silent correspondents beside you: surely they have none.

LXXIX.—To JANE CARLYLE, Mainhill.

3 MORAY STREET, *January* [1822].

DEAR LITTLE JANE—Thou never wrotest me any kind of letter, yet I would be glad to see one from thy hand. There is in that little body of thine as much wisdom as ever inhabited so small a space; besides thou art a true character, steel to the back, never told a lie, never flinched from telling truth; and for all these things I love thee, my little Jane, and wish thee many blithe new years from the bottom of my heart.

Does the little creature ever make any rhymes now? Can she write any? Is she at any school? Has she read the book we sent her? Tell me all this—if thou hast power even to form strokes, that is, to go through the first elements of writing. I am living here in a great monster of a place, with towers and steeples, and grand houses all in rows, and coaches and cars and men and women by thousands, all very grand; but I never forget the good people at Mainhill—nor thee, among the

least in stature though not the least in worth. Write then if thou canst. I am very tired, but always thy affectionate Brother,

TH. CARLYLE.

Give my compliments to *Nimble*, that worthiest of curs. Is Jamie Aitken with you still? I reckon him to be a worthy boy.

LXXX.—From his FATHER.

MAINHILL, *5th January* 1822.

DEAR SIR—I take pen in my hand to write a kind of scrawl to you, to tell you what is going on here. In the first place, I must tell you that I would have written you long before this time to thank you for your kindness manifested to me by the present you sent me. A pair of silver spectacles is a thing I have often looked at and thought of, but never could call any of them my own before. The second reason for my not writing before this is, I have had a very bad cold for three or four weeks back, and I did not wish to write you unless I could tell

you that I was in my ordinary state of health, which I can almost say plainly is the case now. Blessed be God for all His mercies towards us! I need not tell you that times are very bad for farmers just now, for that, I suppose, is known over all the country; but I can tell you that we hear that Mr. Sharpe is about to give us some down-steep of Rent, but the accounts about it are so variable that we cannot say exactly what it will be, some says twenty per cent, some says more, and others says it will be less, only we will know against Candlemas, but, however that may be, I can tell you that I think we can meet him at Candlemas with our full Rent at least for this year, but how we may come on after that I cannot say. The only thing that is talked about here in Smitheys and Mills for these two or three weeks back is final reduction of the Duke of Queensberry tacks;[1] they are now broken without peradventure, and Bogside and Bell of Townfoot and Bank, who for a long time hath fed on green pastures and beside the

[1] The calling-in of the leases which had been granted by the former Duke, "Old Q."

still waters, must now look about themselves like other men. I believe they will get their farms again if they will give as much rent as any other men will give. . . . I must now begin with the most interesting thing of all, that is to tell you how glad I am to hear that you enjoy a modest share of health this winter, which is the first of all Earthly Blessings and a blessing that none can give but He who is the Giver of every good and perfect gift. I understand you have been troubled much with flitting from house to house this winter, but never mind that, you will get over these things. You were telling us you were very throng at this time; that I am very glad to hear, for so far as I know your mind idleness seems to be a trouble to you. You will have a number of scrawls to read this time. We cannot all look for letters from you at this time, but we hope we will hear from you at any rate, and the number of letters will be according to the time you have. My paper is done and I must stop with subscribing myself your loving Father,

JAS. CARLYLE.

LXXXI.—To his MOTHER.

3 MORAY STREET, *12th January* 1822.

MY DEAR MOTHER—I have not only finished my Father's letter, but also discussed my dinner—of more wholesome materials I trust than the last was; and I now gladly address myself to you. Few things in the world give me greater pleasure than to hear from you or write to you. . . .

It is needless to say that I participate in the enjoyment you derive from the continuance of health; a blessing, which, in this singularly unwholesome winter, I am more than usually happy to be assured, continues with you, in some moderate degree. Be thankful; and to show your thankfulness, *be careful!* For my own share, I ought not to complain much either. This room of mine is very excellent in almost all respects. . . . That unutterable nervousness which I laboured under while at home, and far worse before, is now in a great measure gone. I can think and feel like other people; my heart is again become a heart of flesh; and

the *grime* is gradually vanishing from the mirror of the mind. By and by, it will be bright as a new-scoured tankard, or as Will Boggs' boots; and I shall see all things clearly as I was wont. My dear Mother, never be uneasy on my account! I tell you I am going to become a very 'sponsible character yet, and a credit to the whole parish. Seriously, I have better hopes than ever I had,—considerably better.

I know not whether you have heard of Irving's journey to London. He went thither, about three weeks ago, by special request, to close a bargain with the directors of a Scotch chapel there, as to becoming their minister. I believe he has produced a great impression; and is likely (if certain legal formalities can be got rid of) to become their pastor under very favourable auspices, and to earn a vast renown for himself, and do much good among the religious inhabitants of the Metropolis. There are not ten men living that deserve it better. His journey is also likely to prove of some consequence to me.[1] A Lady of a great Indian

[1] See *Reminiscences*, i. 193, *seqq.*

Judge, obliged at present to come home for his health's sake—one Mrs. Buller—heard Irving preach, and without further introduction called upon him next day to talk about the education of her two sons, now at a noted school near London, Harrow-on-the-Hill. It was settled that they were to go to Edinburgh; and I was proposed as their Tutor with a yearly fee of £200, and good accommodations in the house. The woman, he says, is a gallant accomplished person, and will respect me well. He warned her that I had seen little of life, and was disposed to be rather high in the humour, if not well used. She agreed to send the boys into some family in Town for three months, till her husband and she could themselves come; and wished me to take charge of them in the meantime any way;—for altogether, if we should suit each other. I accepted the offer: and shall get fifty pounds for my quarter's work, however it prove. The place, if I like it and be fit for it, will be advantageous for me in many respects. I shall have time for study, and convenience for it, and plenty of cash. At the same time,

as it is uncertain, I do not make it my bower-anchor by any means. If it go to pot altogether, as it well enough may, I shall snap my finger and thumb in the face of all the Indian judges of the earth, and return to my poor desk and quill, with as hard a heart as ever.[1] But you see I am over with it for a time, and must withdraw abruptly. Write whenever you can.—I am ever, my dear Mother's true son,

THOS. CARLYLE.

LXXXII.—To ALEXANDER CARLYLE, Mainhill.

12th January 1822.

. . . . . .

I have told my Father and Mother almost all that is worth telling and unknown to you in

[1] "I desire you," wrote his Mother to Carlyle in answer to this letter, "not to be anxious about succeeding in your new place, but live in a humble dependence on Providence, and walk in the ways of virtue, and there is no fear. Perhaps you may be a blessing to the boys. By all means take care of your health. You will have a walk every day from Leith to the place you teach at. Mind not to sit up too late at night; rise early in the morning. My own health depends on yours."

my situation here. I was at Kirkcaldy the week before last; and spent two days *jannering* and eating dinners with the good people. Mr. Martin the minister offered me the Editorship of a Dundee Newspaper—£100 a-year, and a percentage on the profits; but my ambition to become a Knight of the Paragraph was very small, and I *had nae wull o't.* The minister is a kind man, and true stuff to the core. After returning, I set to on a criticism on *Faust,* which the *Review* people were wanting. They have now agreed to pass it till the next number, and I go on more leisurely. I shall send it whenever it is printed; though it will be very poor, being written on a subject which I have never expressed myself about before, and hence with no small difficulty. It will be far too good, however, for the place it is going to. The dogs have paid me nothing yet—nothing but smiles and fair words, which being hollow are worse than none.

While I was busy with this, Irving's letter came; about the Tutorship—for which see my Father and Mother's letters. I accepted of it

the same night; I mean the trial of it. He would get my answer to-day. I have some hopes from the thing: but we can do either way. Irving is to be in Annan, I understand, very shortly. He seems to have raised the waters yonder; they like him as well as you and Ben Nelson do.

. . . . . .

LXXXIII.—To JOHN A. CARLYLE, Annan.

3 MORAY STREET, *12th January* 1822.

MY DEAR JACK—I have been writing very copious letters to Mainhill all this afternoon; and as I had no time to get one ready for you, my heart partly smites me now that I have come back from the carrier's; and as at any rate I feel somewhat indisposed for dipping into the character and projects of *Faust* to-night, I purpose to solace myself by holding a little chat with you before I go to bed. It is uncertain when you may see this: for I have nothing to communicate but what you will soon know fully by another channel; and therefore I

am not going to take your ninepence halfpenny out of its dry lodging in Wellington Street to put it into his Majesty's treasury, on this occasion; but to give this letter to the Jurist or some other trustworthy person, and let it come cost-free though more slowly.

I thank you very kindly for your letter. It is of the right open-hearted kind, written without reserve from the fulness of your own thoughts; and that is just the thing I want. Write to me often in the same style, not waiting for carriers or the like, but using the convenience of the Post-office without reserve. I always rejoice to see one of your letters, because I am sure of its coming from an honest soul that loves me. I am glad also to find by the epistle in question that you are so much in the way of improvement, and making such large advances in the acquisition of knowledge,—of facts as well as of reflective habits, which are most valuable of all. Go on, my brave Jack! and fear no weather! We have both a sore fight to wage; but we shall conquer at the last. There are many men now lolling upon the

pillow of inglorious sloth, and pitying such adventurers as we: but this *pity* shall not always endure—the lazy *haggises;* they must sink when we shall soar.

Now that you have finished Rollin, I think you ought to begin some other book on general literature, directed if possible like it, in some degree to the progress of your classical studies. There is a *Roman History*, by Hooke, if I mistake not, in your catalogue. Concerning its merits I am not entitled to speak,—never having seen it: I suspect they will be small; but it will undoubtedly contain many details of advantage for you to be familiar with; therefore I partly advise you to get hold of it. Failing this, you might commence Smollett's *Continuation of Hume*, or any continuation of him—for a worse one can scarcely be imagined than Smollett's; and endeavour to make yourself acquainted with the outlines of recent English history. There are some "histories of Scotland" which relate to periods with which perhaps you would like to become acquainted. Laing is a sensible, hard-hearted man (*sic*):

Pinkerton has the most hateful mind of any living author—but his *House of Stuart* is worth looking into. The *Early History* cannot be read by any thinking creature; it is fit only for antiquarians. At all events, read something. A continual exercise of the memory and judgment alone wears out one's energies, and is unprofitable to the faculties in the long run. You will be abundantly able to hold up your head here in the Classes next winter, without overstraining yourself. So take it leisurely upon you. And count upon it, Jack, as a settled thing that you are to appear here. I expect to be able to set you above all fear, whether you get teaching or not,—which, however, is very probable. They will tell you at home about a projected Tutorship, which is yet uncertain, but which, if I like it,—for the most lies there,—will yield me a nett revenue of £200 a-year. Where is the risk then, my boy Jack? And if this all evaporate, I can still translate and compile and write and do rarely. I think my health *is* improving; and I have often said, that I want nothing more. So be

of good cheer, benighted Teanglegg![1] day will dawn upon thee, and a fine country lie disclosed at thy feet, before the year's end.

Parson Sloane must have very peculiar views on the nature of adverbs. "Fence *in* the tender shrubs" is no mysterious phrase; and *in*, if there be any logic upon Earth, is a preposition to all intents and purposes; in composition with "fence" to be sure, and not governing "shrubs," but still a preposition if there ever was one. Does the hysterical pedagogue not know or understand the property of all Saxon languages, and of English among them, which permits the separation of a verb from the preposition in composition with it, and the inversion of their usual arrangement if necessary? Did he never read "I have set-to my seal" in his Bible? Did he never say, "Put to the door"? And is *to* an adverb likewise? After all it is simply a question about terms; and makes no jot of difference, however it be decided. But one does not like to be bravadoed and cowed out of anything. . . .

[1] *Tong-leg*, one of John Carlyle's nicknames in the family.

Now thou must write again, boy, in a few days and tell me all that is in thy liver, both *pro* and *contra*. How does Ben do? Make my best respects to him. I intend writing: but alas! How busy am *not* I? as Potty[1] said —that is Potty of Lauder, who is a good man notwithstanding.

I have written in a strange humour to-night, Jack: melancholickish, ill-naturedish, affectionatish—all in *ish*—for I am very weak and weary, having slept little last night, and sat too much. I am for bed now. Good-night, my Jack! I love thee as well as I can, which is pretty well, considering all things.

If I can rise in time to-morrow morning (which is far from likely) I intend giving this to Dr. Johnston, who has been here witnessing about Armstrong of Glingan's trial. Armstrong is to be quit for a month's imprisonment, as you will hear. Johnston did not give his evidence in full; for they saw, he said to me last night in Waugh's room, he was going to *waken* on them—and so prudently let him travel.

[1] Annandale name for a pedlar of pottery.

I like my room well—the air is good, the landlady is good, and there is *peace.* Alas! for my poor *Book.* But it *shall* appear yet. When shall I begin? Good-night again! Thy affectionate brother,

THOS. CARLYLE.

LXXXIV.—To JOHN A. CARLYLE, Annan.

3 MORAY STREET, *30th January* 1822.

MY DEAR JACK—The Carrier came in to-day, and found me in such a bustle, that though I scrawled off a letter for Home, and delivered it to him, I fear they will be able to make neither "top, tail, nor root out of it:" and I sit down, now more at ease, to give you some regular picture of affairs, in the faith that you will carry it up to Mainhill on Saturday, and so contrive to eke out some tolerable conception of my "whereabout and how" among you. I am going to charge you with postage; but we cannot help it; you must just submit.

In the first place of all, then, you will thank my Mother again and again for her kindness

in sending materials out to me in the box, and good wishes in the letter. I will answer, as I may, in due season. Take up some tea and other such traffic with you—for my sake as well as your own. In the second place, I would have you tell Polwarth [Alexander Carlyle] that his epistle (which I have just read over a second time) is very smart, and contains *just* two small errors: "thankful*l*" and "wh*i*ther" in place of "wh*e*ther." I can see that he has studied Cobbett to some purpose: I hope he will reap the full fruit of his diligence in time. The "old watch" I got duly, and find very serviceable: it goes well, though somewhat nimbly. If there is anything to pay Robie or others connected with it, some of you will stand good: the article is worth fifty of the old one, which indeed was worth very little—if anything. . . .

You, of course, know all the outs and ins, up to a certain date, of this tutoring business. . . . The boys arrived about a week ago, and are to continue some six months at board in the house of one Dr. Fleming, a clergyman,

till their parents arrive. I have entered upon duty, but in a desultory way, and expecting further advice from London. I have offered to take the matter upon trial for a month or two at any rate; and then, if it answer, to commence business regularly, and with the regular salary—£200, and an allowance in the interim instead of board. Mr. Buller, the father, wished some abatement in this period of uncertainty. I proffered leaving the payment at his own discretion, *for the two months;* and having *no* further uncertainty at all. The "memorandum" in which I stated this, together with some other considerations necessary to be impressed upon the man, is now in his possession. It was written with as much emphasis as I could contrive to unite with respectfulness; Irving also has spoken magnificently of me; so that if I enter the family at all, I need expect no supercilious or uncomfortable treatment there: and I still consider the office as lying at my own option, that is, depending on the character of the young men themselves and my suitableness to it. This latter point I have

naturally been doing my utmost to determine during the last week: and though, of course, I have not quite succeeded in *bodomming*[1] the fellows yet, I am rather inclined to hope they will *do*. Both are of superior talents, and much classical instruction: they have few positively bad qualities that I can see, and considerable good nature. *Levity* and inattention are the prevailing faults; and in the elder boy they will be rather difficult to surmount: however I have no fear that he or any one connected with him will ever get the length of *despising* me, and I imagine that patient management on my part will bring about the desired result. A short time will try, and I will tell you regularly how it goes on. They take up all my day—at least the better part of it—at present: from ten o'clock till about one, and from six till nearly eight. If I undertake finally, I shall need to make a fierce push at Greek. But a man will do much for such advantages.

Now, Jack, I have told you all that can be

[1] *Bottoming* = fathoming, testing.

told about this thing. If it prosper, we may all be the better for it. You, certainly, need be under no apprehensions about your education—there will be cash enough to fit you out royally. Indeed you need not fear though it were again the nothing it was four weeks ago. You will almost for certain get teaching next winter: and if not—I have a pen still, and a stout heart belonging to myself. So be of good cheer, my jolly boy; let not thy *winnow-cloth* picture aught sinister in the future. Mind not the *ineptiæ* of the midge Duncan C., or the down-looks of Biggar and the burghers of Annan. Stick to Ben (to whom my best compliments), keep working *cannily* as "doth the little busy bee"—and let the Earth wag as it will. Observe I expect a long letter very soon—by the post; it comes soonest and sureliest. Describe everything to me—*sans peur et sans souci.* What matters what you write to me? —I am, your Brother,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

Johnson's *Tour* will do excellently well to read—or some of Swift's works if you like

humour: did you ever see his *Tale of a Tub* or *Gulliver?* What think you of *Rasselas* or the *Lives of the Poets?* Do you ever make an onslaught upon poetry? There is Pope and Dryden and all the moderns—which people read, independently of their merits, to talk about them. There are also plays out of number from Shakespeare, the greatest of geniuses, down to Cumberland, very far from the greatest. There is much good to be got of reading such things—they improve the style, and fill the imagination with fine objects, and the heart sometimes with bold feelings. Read to amuse yourself as well as to learn; and be not diligent over much.

LXXXV.—To Mr. JAMES JOHNSTONE, Glasgow.

EDINBURGH, *4th February* 1822.

MY DEAR JOHNSTONE—Your letter is dated about three weeks ago, has been expected about two months, and came into my hands only this morning. As I do fully intend to answer it soon, and as there is odds that I shall

not find myself soon in a better mood for answering it than at present, I have adopted the wise resolution of consecrating the passing hour to that duty—obedient to the prudent saw, which assures us that opportunity, hairy in front, is bald behind: *fronte capillata, post est occasio calva.* I say duty; but I might have used a kindlier word. In fact there are few events in my history that yield a more placid enjoyment to my mind, than reading a letter from you or writing one for your perusal. In such cases the sober certainty of your many affectionate and faithful feelings towards me—not altogether unrequited, I hope—mingles itself with the happy recollection of many virtuous and cheerful hours that we have spent together long ago—before either of us had tasted *how* bitter a thing is worldly life; and how wofully our young purposes were to be marred by the low impediments of this confused, inane, and noisy vortex into which both of us have been cast, and where we are still toiling and striving and jostling and being jostled, according to the sentence passed on

Adam, and fulfilled on all his poor descendants. The moonshine nights during which we have strolled along the *loanings* of our native Annandale, the sunny days we have spent in basking on our own *braes*,—talking so copiously and heartily of all things that we knew or did not know; those nights and days are "with the days beyond the Flood," we shall not see them more; but the memory of them is still bright in the soul, and will make us recollect each other with pleasure even to the end. It is a rare fortune that gives to the man the friends of the boy, unsullied by unworthy actions, and still maintaining some similarity of tastes: it is a happiness, however, which has been ours, and I trust, will continue so always. Nor do I in the smallest abandon the hope that future days will be calmer than those that have passed and are passing over us. Depend upon it, my good friend, there is a time coming, when though we may not be great men, we shall be placid ones; when, having mended by much toil what is capable of being mended in our condition, and resigned ourselves to endure

with much patience what in it is incapable of mending, we shall meet together like toil-worn wayfarers descending the mountain cheerily and smoothly which we climbed with danger and distress. "We will laugh and sing and tell old tales," and forget that our lot has been hard, when we think that our hearts have been firm and our conduct true and honest to the last. This should console us whatever weather it is with us: the task is brief; and great is the reward of doing it well.

But this is not a homily: so I take leave of preaching—for which indeed I have no talent. You sadden me by the outline which you draw of your actual situation. A state of health "but indifferent" is signified in one short sentence; yet comprises within it a catalogue of vexatious discomforts which might furnish matter for many volumes. I entreat you in the name of common sense to suspend *every* pursuit that interferes with your attention to this first of all concerns. Out, I say, from your confined dwelling-place! Away to the banks of Clyde, to the Green, to the Country, to

free air! What is all the Greek in the Universe to this? There is more happiness, nay more philosophy, in a sound nervous system, than in all the systems described by Brucker or Buhle, or conceived by any mortal from Thales down to Mr. Owen of Lanark, who scarcely knew the horn-book but "had *no* nerves." Happy brute! I would give all the world sometimes to have no nerves.

These Irish schemes are not likely to be of service, I fear. You did right to reject at once and totally the "potato-plot" and cabin, as well [as] the "thirty pounds" tutorship: and if I were in your place, I would be well assured that the Newton Barry School was certain of yielding something considerably beyond sixty or seventy Pounds annually, before I thought of encountering the *tristia of the Sod* or the vulgar annoyances of those who tread upon it. Still the place seems worth inquiring after; and I hope you will yet hear more of it. But you must absolutely never say another word about New Holland whatever befalls. This I insist upon. Take my word for it, sir, you are

no[t ma]de for emigration. The Colonists may say that Botany Bay is this and that and the other: *n'en croyez rien.* The society will please you infinitely less in the land of Colonists and Kangaroos than it did in Canada or Nova Scotia; and the emoluments of anything in which you could be serviceable must be what they are in all new countries, of a kind quite inadequate to procure you satisfaction of even a tolerable degree. Can you be content with a life in which the stomach shall be filled never so royally, whilst the head and the heart are both left w[aste] and empty? Can you submit to be judged by an ermined sheep-stealer? Can you associate with the half-reformed sweepings of creation, with emeritus felons, with broken agriculturists, ruined projectors, and persons having the bones and sinews of men but nothing more? This is an overcharged picture, I know; but much of it *must* be true: and other pictures look more flattering, chiefly because they embrace the exception, instead of the rule. Consider this, and lay aside your project *for ever.* Stay at home where your

merits—slow of making themselves known anywhere—are at least appreciated by many who respect you and are anxious to patronise you for the sake of them. You can teach well and honestly; your present employment will render you fitter for the task than ever you were; and situations are often casting up which may be gained by honest methods, and made the means of a respectable and permanent establishment *at home.* I had rather go and set up teaching—anywhere in Britain, with no introduction but my staff and scrip, than go to *Australasia* with all the recommendations that could be given me. Be patient and diligent, and you *must* ultimately succeed. In the meantime, if nothing better occur, I think you should return to Bogside in spring for the sake of your health, if it do not completely recover. Take no desponding view of things, my friend; you are young and solidly qualified and true-minded: you will be happy in the end—happy as any one *Here* need care much about being. All that know you like you; food and raiment is sure; what need of more?

I have prosed and prosed till I have left no room to tell you of my own affairs, in which I know you feel deep interest. Write to me immediately, and I will describe everything. Edward Irving has found me a situation, if it answer: ask him about it. Adieu!—I am always your friend,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

LXXXVI.—To his FATHER.

EDINBURGH, *5th February* 1822.

MY DEAR FATHER—I have just received your letter from the hands of Garthwaite, and delivered the box to him. He is going away about five o'clock, and it is already near four; so I have very little time to write in, and you will therefore excuse the confusion and meagreness of which it is probable my letter will exhibit so many proofs. At any rate, I wrote Jack by the Post last week, and on that occasion gave him a full detail; and I suppose you have perused it before now.

I am very glad to learn that you are going on still "in the old way"—which if not the

best possible way, certainly deserves to be reckoned a very fair one, in such times as the present. Even the trifling reduction of twelve per cent will be of some service; and I entertain no doubt that something permanently beneficial to the farming interests must be effected soon by the Legislature: the state of the Country imperiously requires it. You have not surely any reason to fear for your own part: so long as you and my Mother and the rest are blessed with moderate health, there is every reason to be thankful for the actual state of things, and to hope that the future state of them will have improved.

I feel very sorry to learn that Bogside, so long used to health and quiet, has been visited at length with such severe sickness. I trust it will only be for a short time: he is a worthy person in his way; and I have often experienced his kindness. Johnstone wrote to me for the *first* time the day before yesterday! He has been rather sickly, and exceedingly busied. His Irish affair is too likely to evaporate; and he naturally looks into the coming years with

no small anxiety. I feel much for James: he is an honest kind soul as lives by bread; and his fluctuating fortunes are to be imputed less to imprudence or faults on his part, than to the original circumstances in which he grew up, and to the undue neglect he has experienced from those who hold the patronages of this world in their hands. He is irresolute, because he is at once sharp-tempered and affectionate, impatient and indolent, vexed with present evil, and not careful of future good. His mind is not great or strong; but it is true as gold. I wrote him encouragingly yesterday.

Another still more unfortunate and far less amiable character than Johnstone, I mean the celebrated Waugh,[1] comes in contact with me here now and then. Waugh navigates the stream of life, as an immense Dutch lugger would drift along a rocky shoaly sea—at the rate of one mile per hour—the sails and rigging being gone, the compass and chart overboard,

[1] "A kind of maternal cousin or half-cousin of my own. Had been my school comrade (several years older) . . . who, though not without gifts, proved gradually to be intrinsically a good deal of a fool."—*Reminiscences*, i. 93.

the captain, however, still standing by the helm, and by his ignorance and blindness making matters only worse than if he were asleep continually. I know not what is to become of him. One day I pity his case very deeply; and the next some gross imprudence converts my pity into irritation. He has no money I doubt, and little rational prospect of getting any. I offered him some teaching, which he was very glad of when I spoke about it first, which he declined when I saw him a second time, wished to consider further of when I saw him a third time, and finally rejected when I saw him a fourth time. He will most likely find some shark ready to seize upon his property for about the fifth part of its value in ready cash—which he at present longs to do; then spend this hundred pounds in half a year; and afterwards become —I wot not what.

But I have dwelt too long on those points: I must turn to myself. Those boys from London I am still attending daily—from ten o'clock to one, and then from six to eight. They improve upon me. The eldest I have talked a

good deal with; and brought at last—I hope permanently, but cannot affirm — to a more rational style of feeling. He is no bad-hearted fellow: and I am inclined to think will do pretty well in the end. But we have yet heard no word from the Father, though we expected some two days ago; and no durable arrangement can yet be thought of. I like the business for many reasons, and dislike it chiefly because it will cut up my time so enormously for a while. I designed to set about writing some Book shortly; and this (at which I must ultimately arrive, if I ever arrive at anything) will of necessity require to be postponed greatly. On the whole, however, I am in no bad spirits about myself at present. My health is incomparably better than it was a year ago: by the aid of some simple drugs, I keep things in a kind of passable state, which, though far from a right one, is a state calculated to yield me no small consolation, when I compare it with that which preceded. The air I live in too being very good, I expect to go on improving. I am still much pleased with my lodgings, so that

everything, if not exactly as it should be, is at least far better than it might be.

I firmly purposed to write my dear and kind Mother a long letter this opportunity: but five o'clock is already struck; and I must again defer it. Assure her of my continued love—of which indeed she requires no assurance; remember me in brotherly affection to Alick and Jack (from whom I had a letter which went round by Glasgow, and came with Johnstone's), to Mag and Jamie, Mary, Jane and Jenny; not doubting that I remain, my dear Father, your dutiful son,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

I read Robt. Carlyle's letter; but unless you are much better informed about the name of Carlyle than I, the London Gentleman is likely to receive very little insight from us into that ancient patronymic. A large bell was dug up at Dumfries not long ago, of which I suppose he has heard. There is also some notice of Carlyle in Murray's *Genealogy of Bruce:* but I am afraid it is a bad concern,—this "history."

That great-coat will not suit Edinburgh any

longer. Jack may have it if he like—if not, any one. I am done—for it is quite night.

LXXXVII.—To ALEXANDER CARLYLE, Mainhill.

EDINBURGH, 22*d February* 1822.

. . . It is surely galling to a young active mind to look forward to such a fate as sometimes overtakes the improvident or unfortunate cultivator of the soil in our days. To become a Dick of the Grange for example! But beyond all doubt you have no such thing to fear; you are at present discharging a sacred duty; and you have every reason to look forward to a comfortable termination of it. A hundred or two hundred pounds would stock you a neat, snug little farm if times were better, and none who knows your habits and talents would have the smallest doubt about repayment. Who is to advance me two hundred pence? you ask. Whoever of us has it, I answer; and till then we are all alike. Circumstances seem to render it conceivable that I, your obliged, and not ungrateful brother, may have such a sum in my

own possession, ere a year or two elapse; and I here make the promise—not rashly, for I have thought of it fifty times—to let you have the use of it, whenever you think fit. This is, to be sure, selling the chickens while the hen is hatching; and in this light, it looks rather foolish: but you know it is honestly meant; and the hope it points to is not quite chimerical. And granting that it should utterly evaporate—are you not still a hardy free-minded Scotsman, with habits of diligence and frugality known only to few Scotsmen, ready to front the world whatever way it offers itself—and to gather an honest livelihood, from any point of the compass, where a livelihood is to be found? I say, therefore, fear nothing! You or any one of us, will never be a *snool*;[1] we have not the blood of snools in our bodies. Nor shall you ever seriously meditate crossing the great Salt Pool to plant yourself in the Yankee-land. That is a miserable fate for any one, at best; never dream of it. Could you banish yourself from all that is interesting to your mind, forget

[1] A mean-spirited fellow.

the history, the glorious institutions, the noble principles of old Scotland, that you might eat a better dinner perhaps (which you care little for), or drink more rum (which you care naught for) as a great pursey Yankee? Never! my boy—you will never think of it. Scotland has borne us all hitherto; we are all Scots to the very heart; and the same bleak but free and independent soil will, I hope, receive us all into its bosom at last.

. . . . . .

LXXXVIII.—To JOHN A. CARLYLE, Annan.

EDINBURGH, *7th April* 1822.

MY DEAR JACK— . . . Your letter with the enclosed five pounds came to me in due time: I was much pleased with your punctuality—though just what I expected. When you want the money again, let me know. I calculate that I have now as much as will serve me till the Bullers come, when I shall get more; and I beg you will not be in any strait without applying to me—not only for your own (if I should be so negligent as to need being applied

to)—but for any sum within the extent of my resources. Waugh, the bookseller, I caused pay me; and he has done it like a scurvy person—with fifteen pounds, where there should have been five and twenty. "The *Review*[1] has so limited a sale; the, etc., etc." I design writing no more for him, unless driven to it by a necessity harder than I like to anticipate. Yet I give him no rude words—both because rude words generally degrade the person who employs them as much as the person who endures them, and because not knowing what may turn out in the future, I consider that "better a wee bush than nae bield,"[2] and even Waugh's *Review* may be of use to me. At any rate I doubt not the "limited sale" is a very sufficient excuse for his parsimony. My own wonder is that there exists any "sale" at all. If it were not that Providence is a rich provider—furnishing nourishment for all the animated tribes of the universe—one could not *à priori* expect a single purchaser far less a reader for this literary

[1] The short-lived *New Edinburgh Review*.

[2] A Scotch proverb: Better a little bush than no shelter.

moon-calf. Peace be with it! and with all the *hashes* that contribute to create it! They have each a right to a certain portion of the beef slaughtered within this city, and to a certain portion of the oxygen gas that floats around it: far be it from me to wish their privileges curtailed.

The translation of *Legendre* puzzles me a little. I had finished about four or five sheets of it long ago; but the people are getting clamorous for it now, and I not only find no kind of pleasure in the task, but cannot even perform it at all without sacrificing considerable prospects of a far more alluring kind. I have thoughts of giving it up in favour of John Waugh. Could you do it, Jack? Have you time and spirit for it, I mean? If you think so—I wish you would try a portion and let me see; the beginning of the fifth book, for example: write it out in a legible hand (no matter how ugly) and send it up by the first opportunity. This idea struck me about a minute ago: consider of it seriously. If the work did not too much destroy your time, it would pay very well, and such things

do not always occur when one wants them. I am confident, I could make you do it well if I had you here. Say what you think of it—if you think anything. . . .

I want a long letter from you, as soon as possible—including all your experiences, your hopes. Send me large batches of news; let everything be fish that comes within your net. . . .

I am going to enclose the critique on *Faust*. You may show it to Ben, if he cares for it; and then let them have it at home. I hope you go often up to Mainhill—and take little nicknacks with you sometimes to our invaluable Mother. Carry my love to her and our worthy Father, and all the rest of them. Remind Polwarth, and my other correspondents of their epistolary duties. Farewell, my good Jack; it is bedtime, and I am tired enough, and feeble, though still your affectionate brother,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

LXXXIX.—To ALEXANDER CARLYLE, Mainhill.

EDINBURGH, *Saturday, 27th April* 1822.

MY DEAR ALICK—I have just read over your very lively, kind, and acceptable letter; which, though the Carrier as usual has left me completely in the dark as to the period of his outgoing or even his personal Identity, I proceed to answer as minutely as the various calls upon my time will permit. . . .

I feel very contented in my usual state—full of business even to overflowing, with projects of all sorts before me, and some few rational hopes of executing a definite portion of them. With regard to the Book, it is true, as you guess, that I have been "riddling Creation" for a subject to dilate upon; and have felt no small disquietude till I could find something suitable. Within the last month, however, I have well-nigh fixed upon a topic, and I feel considerable alacrity and much more contentment than formerly, in laying in materials for setting it forth. My purpose (but this only among yourselves!) is to come out with a kind

of Essay on the Civil Wars [and] the Commonwealth of England—not to write a history of them—but to exhibit, if I can, some features of the national character as it was then displayed, supporting my remarks by mental portraits, drawn with my best ability, of Cromwell, Laud, George Fox, Milton, Hyde, etc., the most distinguished of the actors in that great scene. I may, of course, intersperse the work of delineation with all the ideas which I can gather from any point of the universe. If I live, with even moderate health, I purpose to do this; and if I can but finish it according to my own conception of what it should be, I shall feel much happier than if I had inherited much gold and silver. The critics, too, may say of it either nothing or anything, according to their own good pleasure; if it once please my own mighty *self*, I do not value them or their opinion a single rush. Long habit has inured me to live with a very limited and therefore a dearer circle of approvers: all I aim at is to convince my own conscience that I have not taken their approbation without some just claims to it.

These are the fairy regions of Hope, from which I am incessantly recalled by multitudes of less glorious but more urgent actual duties. The printing of *Legendre* is fairly begun—and intended to proceed at the rate of two sheets per week. I thought to steer clear of it, and fix it on Waugh, but it would not do: so I am in for it myself, and expect to be kept as busy with it "as a cock on the spit" till after August. I purpose making Jack help me a little: I have indeed need of help; and my studies, even with it, in so far as *the* Book is concerned, must in the meantime go on rather leisurely. The hours I spend in teaching are by no means uncomfortable—except as they consume my leisure, which I would gladly devote to other objects: the boys are very brave-hearted fellows—particularly the elder,—and respect me sufficiently. I still look upon our final agreement, however, as a thing not to be counted on: but fortunately, like *Cowthat's* weather, "it may be *owther* way," without affecting me immensely. I have plenty of offers from Booksellers, etc. (whose anxiety to employ

me naturally increases in the inverse ratio of my want of employment), to undertake editions of works, and so forth, under terms sufficiently liberal: and at the beginning of August I shall have "money in my purse" to set me above the necessity of drudgery for a long while. So I do not feel much apprehension; none at all, if it were not for the matter of health, which also, as I have said, has a favourable aspect at present.

Thus, my dear fellow, have I prated to you for "a strucken hour" of myself and my doings—sure of an attentive and interested listener, and careless of concealing whatever solicited utterance. I must now draw bridle. There were a thousand questions that I meant to ask you; but you must endeavour to forestall them next opportunity, and to send me all the details you can collect. . . .

I wish I could get a box home this time; for I want some cakes and eggs: I think if you sent about a *quarter* of meal, the landlady here could make me cakes herself. She bakes tolerable ones out even of the sawdust, which they—

falsely—call oatmeal in these parts. But I must off to the Carrier's lodgings, and see what can be done. Adieu, my dear Alick!—I am always, your affectionate Brother,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

XC.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

EDINBURGH, *30th April* 1822.

MY DEAR MADAM—I address myself with the greatest pleasure to the task you have so kindly imposed on me. I very much approve your resolution to exercise your powers in some sort of literary effort; and I shall think myself happy, if by any means I can aid you in putting it in practice. There is nothing more injurious to the faculties than to keep poring over books continually without attempting to exhibit any of our own conceptions. We amass ideas, it is true; but at the same time we proportionally weaken our power of expressing them; a power equally valuable with that of conceiving them, and which, though in some degree like it, the gift of Nature, is in a far higher degree the

fruit of art, and so languishes more irretrievably by want of culture. Besides, our very conceptions, when not taken up with the view of being delineated in writing, are almost sure to become vague and disorganised; a glimpse of the truth will often satisfy mere curiosity equally with a full view of it; so hallucinations are apt to be substituted for perceptions: and even if our materials were all individually accurate, yet being gathered together from every quarter, and heaped into one undistinguished mass, they form at last an unmanageable chaos, serving little purpose except to perplex and cumber the mind that lives among them—to make it vacillating, irregular, and very unhappy—at least if it have not the fortune to be a pedant's mind —who, I believe, is generally a very cheerful character.

So that you see it is every way incumbent upon you to commence writing without loss of time; and to continue it steadily as you proceed in the acquisition of knowledge, thus causing the development of your taste and of your ability to realise its dictates to go forward hand in

hand. I do not imagine that you stand in need of all this confused logic to animate you in this undertaking:—inclination, I know well enough, impels you sufficiently at present; but inclination is ofttimes rather an unsteady guide, and at no time the worse for having conviction along with it.

There is not room here for dilating upon the peculiarities of your genius; to which at any rate I have no right to make myself inspector, even if my knowledge of the subject rendered my opinion worth the giving. I cannot help saying, however, that according to my imperfect observations, you seem, with great keenness of intellectual vision generally, to unite a decided tendency to the study of human character both as an object of curiosity and of love or contempt, and to manifest a very striking faculty of expressing its peculiarities, not only by description, but imitation. This is the very essence of dramatic genius; and if I mistake not, the blame will lie elsewhere than with Nature if you fail of producing something worth producing in this department. It de-

pends on other circumstances than your intellectual powers, whether you should adopt the tragic or the comic species of composition: you know whether you feel more disposition to sympathise with the wretched or to laugh at the happy; to admire excellence or to search out defects; to cherish long, vehement, heartfelt, perhaps extravagant enthusiasm, or to exert the force of your heart in brief, violent sallies, the violence of which a sense of propriety is ever subduing and rendering of short continuance—converting indignation into derision, sympathy into pity, and admiration into respect. The truth is, those two kinds of talent are never so accurately divided in nature, as the two objects of them are in art; most people who could write a tragedy of merit could write a sort of comedy also, and *vice versa*. It is not indeed necessary to confine your efforts either to the one or the other; the kind of genius named dramatic may be employed in a thousand ways unconnected with the theatre; it gives life and splendour to the picturesque novels of Sir Walter Scott; and forms, in a different

shape, the basis of much sublime philosophy in the treatises of Madame de Staël. It is misemployed only when it is unoccupied; when the understanding, the invention, the fancy which might have given it a local habitation and a name, a shape and vehicle, are devoted to purposes into which it does not enter—to studying abstract sciences or manufacturing smart paragraphs—writing epigrams or reading metaphysics and mathematics—or anything of a similar stamp. I would not have you, therefore, confine yourself too rigidly to mere Plays; it will be enough if you are engaged in the delineation or inspection of Character—without which I imagine you cannot do justice to your powers; but in the investigation of which you are not bound to any particular form of composition, being at liberty to cast your ideas into the shape of a historical description, of a Panegyric, of a novel, quite as much as of a regular drama. For this reason—But the subjects? you say—the subjects—and have done with this prosing! . . . *Cetera desunt.*

T. CARLYLE.

XCI.—To his MOTHER, Mainhill.

3 MORAY STREET, *Saturday*,
[*May* 1822 ?]

MY DEAR MOTHER— . . . You will find here a bonnet of Imperial chip or Simple chip, or Real chip, or whatever it is, which I hope will arrive safely and be found to suit you. I think it looks like your head. I wish it were fifty times better for your sake: it would still be the most feeble testimony of what I owe to your kind affection, which has followed me unweariedly through good and evil fortune, soothing and sweetening all the days of my existence, and which I trust Providence will yet long, long continue for a blessing to us both.

I know you will fret about those things, and talk about expense and so forth. This is quite erroneous doctrine: the few shillings that serve to procure a little enjoyment to your frugal life, are as mere *nothing* in the outlay of this luxurious city. If you want any other thing, I do beg you would let me know: there is not any

way in which I can spend a portion of my earnings so advantageously. Tell me honestly, Do you get tea and other things comfortably? I should be very sorry if you restricted yourself for any reason but from choice. It would be a fine thing surely, if you that have toiled for almost half a century in nourishing stalwart sons, should not now by this means have a little ease and comfort, when it lies in their power to gain it for you! I again entreat you, if you wish for anything within the reach of my ability, to let me hear of it.

. . . . . .

I entrust you with my affectionate remembrances to my Father, and all the family, every one. They owe me letters now, which they cannot pay a minute too soon. Bid the Carrier be sure to ask for the box next time he comes; it will be in readiness for him. At the present, I do not want anything. I shall give you proper notice when I do.

Farewell, my dear Mother! May all Good be with you always! Your affectionate Son,

TH. CARLYLE.

XCII.—To JOHN A. CARLYLE, Annan.

3 MORAY STREET, *19th May* 1822.

MY DEAR JACK—I was hindered from writing to you last night by the most ignoble of all causes, the presence of that small pragmatical Jurist, whose visits to me—happily of rare occurrence—seldom yield *the same* degree of satisfaction to both parties concerned. I cannot altogether dislike the poor wight, for he is not without many goodish qualities, and aims after better things than the mere practitioning of Law: I only regret that he should select me for his Mentor, especially when actually enduring the operation of so much speculation upon ephemeralities,—so feeble and so fearfully compensating its shallowness by its breadth. He does not afflict me, however, above once a week or so; being chained to his desk in general, or doing the errands of his petty-fogging Principal in the mighty deep of Attorneyship here; a task of which himself even seems to feel very heartily sick. I wish the boy no harm at all.

Your paper came duly to hand.[1] I thank you for the anxious punctuality you have shown; and I am happy, on looking over the article, to find that you have acquitted yourself so manfully; happy both for your sake, to see you possessed of, and going on to acquire, so steady a knowledge of the English tongue and the art of composition,—and for my own sake, to find the manuscript so well fitted for going directly to the Press. . . .

As for the Trigonometry, begin it when you like; I shall take your assistance joyfully,—though I again insist that you do not let it vex you overmuch, or consume your time too greatly. I am so kept with the thing, that no help will give me the faculty of serious study or any kind of permanent composition, till it be done: therefore it is not fit that you should throw good diligence after bad—in labour which can at best be little more than intermission to me, not rest—if it indeed do anything but encourage my indolence, already more than sufficiently abundant.

[1] The translation of a part of *Legendre*.

You have not written me any long or full account of your walk and conversation, for a long while. See you try this soon. . . .

My own condition is 'mending very greatly, on the whole: I have not had such a measure of health and spirits for three years as I enjoy at present. It was the very making or rather saving of me that I came down here to live; no mortal but a nervous dyspeptic wretch can tell what heaven it is to escape from the tumult and stench and smoke and squalor of a city out into the pure ether and the blue sky, with green fields under your very window and bushy trees in the distance, and little noise but the gambols of happy children, the peaceful labours of spadesmen, the voice of singing birds. I sit down to my desk or my book, with the windows pulled down and up—the fresh young air of May around, all Nature seeming to awake like Beauty from her couch; and my very heart is glad sometimes that I am delivered so as even partially to enjoy this pure and simple pleasure. I go down and bathe every morning before breakfast, when I can effect it; which

has been daily for the last three days, the distance not being above a mile, and the water clear as glass. This I find to be a most excellent practice. Yesterday I fell in with Waugh on the beach, his broad fat face appearing among the Newhaven fishing-craft, just as I emerged. (I should have said I did not get down yesterday till noon.) Waugh had been calling for me, and missing his purpose, had advanced to the far-end. I proposed going home directly, but Waugh fixed his eye on a monstrous *meerswine* (porpoise, or *purpose* as they call it) which some fishers had just flayed; and being smit with the lust of knowledge, he insisted on dissecting the carcass to discover its anatomical structure. It would have made the weeping Philosopher himself smile to see Waugh gutting this monster of the Deep—up to the elbows almost in gore and filth, descrying with a rapturous shout the various midriffs and puddings and cats-collops of its bestial belly—stretching its guts along the gravel and measuring their length with a measuring-reed (made of sea-tangle—one of the small guts of

the beast was like a short day's journey in length—somewhere about sixty feet, if I recollect)—the whole of this amid a crowd of brown fishermen, idle serving-maids, and scrubby boys, who eyed Waugh with astonishment and awe, and stood waiting *till* he would extract the oil or ambergris or balm or precious stone, for which they felt sure he must be digging so painfully. I tired of it, or he would have struck upon a young shark also, which attracted his attention by similar allurements. Waugh is the placidest man on Earth for certain: at the instant when he was gutting this shapeless hulk of stinking flesh, I believe he could not have commanded *sixpence* anywhere in Nature. Yet he minds not, living on Hope.

The Bullers and I go on very well together: they are really good creatures and pleasant to be near, though they do not stick to their learning as I could wish. I have never yet calculated on the absolute certainty of my engaging in their family. I can do it, or not do it, as occasion serves; which is the fine way to be in. If this stomach-disorder ("the *baddest*

disorder that follows the *kyercage*," as an old blind Irishman called it yesterday) will but be kind enough to take its leave; then *basta!*—I care not for any man or thing!

Send my love to Mainhill, when you have a chance; I long for the Carrier, that I may get eggs and cakes. Tell them to send my jean trousers and as many cotton socks as they can raise—if any. Will you or Alick also write to Shaw of Dumfries for another pair of shoes exactly like the last pair, or just one hair's-breadth longer? He may send them out to Ecclefechan at his leisure; from whence they may find their way hither. I have detained you long, Jack, and *must* now withdraw. I am glad our Mother's bonnet fits, I need not bid you be kind to her by every way you can.—I am always your affectionate Brother,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

XCIII.—From his MOTHER.

MAINHILL, 26*th May* 1822.

DEAR SON—I got the bonnet which you sent

me. It fits very well; I am certainly highly pleased with this fresh token of your kindness and attention towards me. Amid all this turmoil it soothes me to think that there is one who can sympathise with me; who knows all the little inconveniences I have to struggle with; who is so fond of anticipating all my wants.

I once more remind you to be thankful to the Giver of all good for his kindness in granting you better health. Be careful to preserve your health. I am glad to hear that you bathe every morning before breakfast; you must take care not to go too deep in. Is the place level? I am anxious to know when you will get home. I long to have a long crack with you and to talk all matters over. Tell me about this next time.

I intend to go to Dumfries on Wednesday to see all my friends. Mary Stewart has been ill ever since you went away. I wish you would write to John Aitken;[1] he has had a good deal of trouble of late, and it would be some consolation to him.

[1] Old Mrs. Carlyle's brother; Mary Stewart was his wife.

I have had your socks ready for a long time; but I have not had an opportunity of sending them: Farries called for the box last time he was out, but he says that he could neither find you nor the landlady. Send it home. And write me fully and tell me about all your affairs. You know none of them can be uninteresting to me.—I am, dear Tom, yours affectionately,

MARGARET CARLYLE.

XCIV.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

3 MORAY STREET, 27*th May* 1822.

MY DEAR FRIEND—I kept looking out for you or your Mother almost every day last week; not once suspecting that you could visit Edinburgh and leave it, without communicating that event to so important a person as myself. It were unprofitable, not to say absurd, to make any kind of outcry about this occurrence now; and very absurd to charge you with any blame in the matter: another time, however, I hope for better fortune.

I have little leisure for writing to-day; only

I could not defer sending you Sismondi's book, which I hope you will peruse with some profit as well as enjoyment. It is equally remote from the *nonsense* of *Atala*, and from the rude, melancholy vastness of that famous work—otherwise in truth so full of gross deformities. Sismondi is a lively, dapper, elegant little fellow, full of good sense and learning and correct sentiment: he resembles our Jeffrey somewhat—a *clever* man, with rather less of natural talent than Jeffrey has, and about ten times as much knowledge and culture. You must read his Treatise if possible; were it but for the sake of the Italians, in whose literature he is extremely versant.

It gives me great pleasure to find you so hearty in our poetical project: I trust good will come of it to us both. Hardly any creature is born without some thrills of poetry in his nature, which practice and instruction might enable him to express; and surely it were delightful, if when the mind feels so inflamed or overpowered in the various turns of this its confused and fluctuating existence,—astonished at the stu-

pendous aspect of the universe—charmed, saddened, tortured in the course or in the prospect of its own great and gloomy and mysterious destiny,—it could embody those emotions, which now serve only to encumber and depress it, in music and imagery, in "thoughts that breathe and words that burn"; so gratifying, by employing, its own best faculties; and brightening its own sensations, by causing all around to share in them. Nature, it is true, makes one right Poet seldom—scarcely in the hundred years; but she makes a thousand rhymers in the day, with less or more of poetry in each. Our attempt then is not too arduous: I predict, that if we persevere, we shall both succeed in making very tolerable verses, *perhaps* something more than tolerable; and this itself I reckon a very pleasing and harmless and very ornamental acquirement. Many a time I have wished that, when ruining my health with their poor lean triangles and sines and tangents and fluxions and calculi, I had but been writing any kind of doggerel, however weak: it would have improved the

understanding, at least *mine* I am sure, quite as much or more—that is, left it where it was; and *now*, I might have been inditing odes and dithyrambics by the gross! The past is gone for aye: but—"better late than never!" as the adage runs. Do not think me altogether crazy: I am no poet, "have no genius," I know it well; but I *can* learn to make words jingle whenever I think fit; and by the blessing of Heaven, we two will try it now in concert as long as we like.

I wish, therefore, you would meditate some plan, some terms and conditions for carrying it on. Shall we prescribe the subject alternately? And should it be a *specific* subject that is prescribed—or merely the *class* of subjects to which it must belong—"a descriptive piece" for instance,—"an incident—pathetic—tragical—ludicrous"—"a character—great—bad," etc.—or *some* descriptive piece—*some* incident—*some* character? Or shall it merely be that each is to give in a certain quantity of verse within a stated time? Settle all this to your own satisfaction—or leave it all unsettled if you like better. I

have yet had no time to consider the business properly, or even to select a proper topic for our *coup d'essai.* The most plausible task I can hit upon is a little article to be entitled *The Wish,* wherein we are to set forth respectively the kind of fate and condition we most long for—and have some feeble expectation of attaining. Yours will be very different from mine, I know. It will be curious to compare notes, if we both deal honestly—which is not necessary, however. Try this; and send it along when ready—with another theme, so it be an easy one.

These little *parergies* and recreations will do you no harm, I am persuaded; yet I cannot help still wishing to see you employed in some more serious composition, while your stock of knowledge from books and other sources must be augmenting so rapidly. Did you think anything about the essay on Madame de Staël? I am still of opinion that it would be a very fine exercise for you; and one you are well prepared for, having studied all her writings and feeling so deep an interest in all that concerns her. What is to hinder you from delineating your

conception of her mind; saying all you feel about her character as a thinker, as a poet, and still more as a woman; comparing her in all these respects both with the ordinary throng of mortals, and with all the distinguished females you have heard or formed any idea of? I really wish you would begin in sober prose, and do this for me as honestly and correctly as you possibly can. I inquired after her *Life* for you to-day; but it could not be had: however, if you engage to execute this undertaking, or otherwise desire to see the book, I will certainly find it. Consider this at any rate, for I am eager about it, being convinced it would prove useful to you.

The interest you take in my unfortunate projects I feel with the gratitude due to your kind treatment of me on all occasions. That historico-biographical one is still in embryo, but not yet abandoned. It seems quite indispensable that I should make an effort soon; I shall have no settled peace of mind till then. Often it grieves me to be besieged with Printers'-Devils wanting *Copy* (of *Legendre*, a "most

scientific" treatise on Geometry which I unhappily engaged to translate long ago)—with small boys studying Greek, and the many cares of life; when I *might* be, etc. Till August, I cannot even get this *Book* fashioned into any shape, much less actually commenced. Meantime I read by snatches, partly with a view to it. If ever, which is just possible, I get the mastery over these difficulties, which it is hard to strive with but glorious to conquer, I shall experience many an enviable feeling at the thought of having vindicated Jane for the encouragements she gave me. Excuse this silly idea—for it is pleasant to me; and this dull letter, which I have already spun out too long. —I am, ever yours,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

I am already too late for the Coach; so I shall take time enough with your translation of "The Fisher." Be sure to send me abundance of such "trash" as your verses on the sunset, and those from *Atala;* it is of the kind I like.

If Shandy understood articulate speech, I would gladly return his compliments; for he is

a dog of worth undoubtedly. He would give me welcome whenever he met me, which is all he can do, poor fellow,—and more than every one of our human friends can do.

You should take a long ride, *every* day—your mother should insist on it.

XCV.—To ALEXANDER CARLYLE, Mainhill.

3 MORAY STREET, *2d June* 1822.

. . . . . .

You make a great work about the little *Junius*, my brave and proud young man: it cost me nothing, being given me by the fat bookseller Boyd; it was worth to me nothing; and I thought it might not be quite useless to you—that is all. The list of books you send me I shall be most prompt to purchase on the easiest terms possible, and I mean to set about the needful inquiries directly. Knox you will find in the box. I bought it many weeks ago. There is one of the works mentioned in your list, which I cannot make out; "*Raley's*" *Shipwreck* it seems to be, and *Raley* is a man I

never heard of.[1] Write it more distinctly next time, or give Jack in charge to transmit the name from Annan if he send me a letter sooner.

I would not have you be in anxiety about the state of your intellectual culture: I assure you it seems to me to proceed at a most respectable rate; and as to the reading of books, I may remind you how little that of itself will perfect any man; how much is to be learnt by daily observation, and solitary reflection, which no book can give us; how much more valuable is the strong good sense of a true man, the minute and ever-present knowledge of his duties in every emergency, and the firm purpose to act accordingly—than all the mere *learning* which School or College ever taught. I have no doubt you will find abundant time to read, if you improve it all; you have within a year or two already mastered the elements of correct composition and general knowledge,—can now write a letter *well*, and understand the

[1] His brother doubtless wanted that entertaining and pathetic book, Captain James Riley's *Narrative of the Loss of the American Brig "Commerce" on the West Coast of Africa.* It was reprinted in London in 1817.

outlines of history and literature; you have men around you to study, a heart within you and a world without to survey; and your natural talents for doing all this are good. Be of good cheer then, boy; go on discharging your duties in the same diligent manful manner you have done hitherto,—improve your faculties as you have opportunity; and be sure of acting at a future day that honourable part in life which your rational ambition makes you wish to act. But I am preaching, when I should be *telling:* let me cease for once!

I have gone on enjoying very considerable improvement of health since I wrote last. The weather may be called delightful at present; sun shining, small breeze blowing, ground green *as leeks.* My windows "look to the Forth,"—which I do not see, however, though I used to hear its hoarse and everlasting voice in winter winds,—and I get a view nightly of the Sunset. It is very grand to witness the great red fiery disc, sinking like a giant to sleep, among his crimson curtains of cloud—with the Fife and Ochil hills for his bedstead! I often look at

him till I could almost break forth into tears, if it would serve,—or into some kind of poetical singing, if I could sing. To return to prose, the good weather and the sea-bathing, and the eight miles I have to walk daily are doing my poor shattered carcase no small service: in a year, at this rate, I might be as well as you.

I am also very busy, which is another great thing. That lubber Translation is proceeding at an easy though irregular rate; then I read for the *Civil Wars*—which, alas! are still like birds in the shell—and may be, I dread, for many months. . . .

T. CARLYLE.

XCVI.—To his MOTHER, Mainhill.

3 MORAY STREET, *2d June* 1822.

MY DEAR MOTHER—I feel I am going to be very hurried, yet I cannot let slip this opportunity of scribbling you a few lines, however brief and insufficient, to let you know the state of my affairs for some time; and to thank you for these new proofs of your constant attention to me. I *hushed* a great many things into the

Box, which, however, you need be in no haste to send back, as I am sufficiently provided by the supplies of to-day. Perhaps it were better to send merely letters by Farries next time; and to bid him call for the little Box to carry home with him, seeing it is of a more reasonable size than the one I sent. I need no more socks, etc., at present, having purchased three pairs the other night, which together with yours make up a very reasonable stock. I gave 1s. 4d. a pair for them—dear, I suppose—for they are thin as nets, but cool and agreeable in this warm weather. I hope Shaw will not neglect the shoes I wrote to Jack about: I shall soon want them.

These matters of business being adjusted, I proceed to give you some sketch of my way of doing at present, in which I know you ever feel a tender and truly motherly interest. It will give you pleasure to know that I continue progressively improving in that most important of qualities, good health. The bathing does me great good; and you need be under no apprehension of my drowning; for the bottom is

smooth shelving sand or pebbles, I stay but a moment in the water, and never go near the end of my depth: besides, I swim if need were, which is not. Unfortunately my mode of sleeping is too irregular to admit of my bathing constantly before breakfast; though I manage this often, and almost always go some time in the day. . . .

You ask about my home-coming; but this must be a very uncertain story for a while. I cannot count on any such thing till *Legendre* be done, and the Buller people arrived; and in the event of my engaging with the latter, my period of absence must of course be [brief]. However, there is good and cheap conveyance to Dumfries daily, and it shall go hard if I do not steal a week or so to spend at Home.

I was in Glasgow some time ago, seeing Irving and all the rest of them. It was during this period that Mr. Lawson called on me, and found me not: present my best thanks and services to him for so doing. They have been holding their General Assembly here the other week, had Dr. Chalmers among them, etc: I

did not see anything of it, except a few Beef-eaters, pages with cocked hats, etc., dangling after the Commissioner's chair. The Commissioner himself I understand to be one of the meanest knaves north of the Tweed. But *there* is six o'clock, my hour of marching. Farewell, my dear Mother! It is the dearest blessing of my lot that I have you to write to, and to care for me. Send me a long account of all you do and feel. My Father has not written to me for a long time: give my love to him and to all the rest, Mag, Jamie, Mary, Jane, and Jenny. I suppose they are busy planting potatoes or hoeing turnips, or they would write to me.—I am ever, my dear Mother, your affectionate Son,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

XCVII.—To JOHN A. CARLYLE, Annan.

3 MORAY STREET, 23*d June* 1822.

MY DEAR JACK—I must either borrow a few minutes from the Sunday, in order to send you my news, or I am like to find no other time for

doing it. And after all I am not sure that this employment is much worse than the one I was last engaged in. Physically speaking, at least, it is much better; and morally, if we only view the life that now is. Three-quarters of an hour ago I was mewed up in Lady Yester's Church, frying with heat, and subject to the genial influence of fifteen hundred pairs of Lungs all exhaling their invigorating products against me; while for compensation I had the intellectual refreshment of hearing a black lean scarecrow of a Probationer illustrate and prove like Euclid himself "that all conditions of life have their own peculiar sorrows," a truth which most likely none of his audience ever dreamt of before. And here—I am sitting under the shadow of my own roof, with the windows all up, a calm shower pattering around me; my dinner swallowed, and the pen in my hand to scribble whatsoever comes uppermost, for the behoof of one who cares for all that concerns me. "Judge ye!" . . .

You do well to read Gillies, but as for Hallam, you may safely let him rest, he is

heavy as clay, and you would relish him little or profit by him little till after reading Gibbon and various others. Washington Irving has a new Book, *Bracebridge Hall*, which is very good. You ought to read *all* Scott's Novels at odd hours—and Byron's poetry—and Shakespeare —and Pope—and the like. These things are of the very highest value.

You ask about my coming home in August: but this must depend on other wills than mine. The Bullers are not arrived yet, though soon expected; and if we engage with each other, I fear I shall hardly get down. . . . Of course you will make all arrangements in due time for leaving Annan. I anticipate great pleasure from having you beside me next winter. Even living with the Bullers, I may see you daily. Write soon; and tell me everything about the Mainhill friends—to whom my warmest Love.— I am always your affectionate brother,

TH. CARLYLE.

XCVIII.—To his MOTHER, Mainhill.

EDINBURGH, *29th June* 1822.

MY DEAR MOTHER—Contrary to expectation I have still a few minutes before me, in which I can scribble a line or two for your perusal; and as I know you are always pleased at hearing from me, I gladly devote them to that purpose. There are two letters here which have lain for you and Alick many weeks; they are now out of date to all intents and purposes, but I send them as proofs that if I disappointed you last time there was a box here, the blame was not mine.

I have got none but the most scanty notices from Mainhill, for a long while; and I am very anxious, as is natural, to have more particular information. I can only trust in the meantime that Providence still favours you with a moderate degree of health and comfort; and I entertain the hope that in spite of all obstacles I shall see you ere long—to have a cup of tea and a whiff together, and talk over all our mutual concerns. In reckoning over my bless-

ings, and balancing them against my woes, one of the largest articles in the former side of the account is the happiness of having you to share so deeply as I know you do in all that affects my interests. I should be worse than a dog, if I could ever forget the kind treatment I experienced at Mainhill, when it was so difficult, though at the same time so needful to treat me kindly. . . .

I am in very fair health considering everything; about a hundred times as well as I was last year this time, and as happy as you ever saw me. In fact I want nothing but steady health of body (which I shall get in time) to be one of the comfortablest persons of my acquaintance. I have also books to write, and things to say and do in this world, which few wot of. This has the air of vanity, but it is not altogether so: I consider that my Almighty Author has given me some glimmerings of superior understanding and mental gifts; and I should reckon it the worst treason against him to neglect improving and using to the very utmost of my power these His bountiful mercies.

At some future day, it shall go hard, but I will stand *above* these mean men, whom I have never yet stood *with*. But we need not prate of this.

I am very much satisfied with my teaching: in fact it is a pleasure rather than a task. The Bullers are quite another sort of boys than I have been used to, and treat me in another sort of manner than tutors are used to. When I think of General Dirom's brats, and how they used to vex me, I often wonder that I had not broken their backs at once, and left them. This would not have done, to be sure; but the temptation was considerable. The eldest Buller is one of the cleverest boys I have ever seen: he delights to inquire—and argue and—be demolished; he follows me nigh home almost every night. Very likely I may bargain finally with the people: but I have had no certain intimation on the subject; and in fact I do not care immensely whether or not. There is bread for the diligent to be gained in a thousand ways.

I am very sorry to learn that my aunt Mary Stewart has been so long poorly. I will certainly

write to my uncle John some time very soon. My Father has not written to me for a long series of weeks.[1] I would have sent him a letter to-day, if I had not been hurried beyond expression. Write to me yourself or by proxy if you can manage it the first opportunity.—I am ever, my dear Mother, your affectionate son,

TH. CARLYLE.

XCIX.—To JOHN A. CARLYLE, Annan.

3 MORAY STREET, *5th July* 1822.

MY DEAR JACK— . . . Your parcel arrived by the Penny-post on Monday night: and gratified I was to see the pains you had been at in serving me. The manuscript was all made right, with great ease, before bedtime;

[1] On the 21st of July his Father wrote: "I must declare that my communication with you this season has been very limited . . . but writing letters is a strange work to me now, and I do not come well at the work. . . . You will be thinking I should tell you all the news in this place, but as it is the Sabbath morning and I am going to hear sermon, it will not answer to dwell on that subject. I will only tell you that we are all well, and just fighting on in the old way; the weather is good and hath been so for a long time, and the crop looks well, and we are as independent as ever."

and is at this instant in the act of being *set up*, as they call it; so that you may look for a printed copy by almost the first opportunity. It was all very good and serviceable: it does you credit in my eyes, as a proof of your diligent and successful attention to the art of composition; and gains you favour in another even more gratifying respect, as a proof of your readiness to engage in any task likely to ease or benefit your much-obliged Brother. I am now within forty pages of the end, and expect soon to relinquish and have concluded the long labour, which has occupied me much, though not unprofitably or disagreeably.

Edward Irving and W. Graham came in upon me last night, while sipping my tea with Dr. Fleming and the rest. Edward is gone out to Haddington to-day, and proposes setting off towards London on Wednesday next. He told me of some conversation he had had with you, touching your embracing some profession; and also of his having recommended Medicine as the most promising line of life on which you could enter. I have frequently meditated on

this subject myself; and certainly it is of vital importance for you to consider it deeply, now that you are about to quit your pedagogic situation at Annan, and to enter upon the acquisition of those accomplishments which are to gain a livelihood and respectability for you during the rest of your days. I can tell you from experience that it is a sad thing for a man to have his bread to gain in the miscellaneous fashion which circumstances have in some degree forced me into; and I cannot help seeing that with half the expense, and one-tenth of the labour which I have incurred, I might at this time have been enjoying the comforts of some solid and fixed establishment in one of the regular departments of exertion, had I been lucky enough to have entered upon any one of them. It is true, no doubt, that by diligence and good talents a man may pick out a kind of peculiar path by his own ingenuity in this world; but still this is so precarious an enterprise that I would counsel no one to embark in it without a strict necessity compelling him. If you think you could relish the study and

practice of Medicine, I make no doubt of your ability to excel in it; and for the necessary qualification—I bid you be in no pain whatever. It shall go harder with me than it looks to do, if you be not made fully able to attend all their classes here, without interruption on any pecuniary score; and for the diligence and intellect required in the business—you have already shown all these qualities in sufficient abundance to put me to peace on that head. Upon the whole, I wish you would turn this matter calmly over in your mind with all due attention, and write to me about it as soon as you can come —not to any conclusion—but simply to any tangible deliverance on it. If your mind leads you to relish the project, you can partly be putting it in execution the first winter you come hither; you might attend to Anatomy and Chemistry at the same time that you were perfecting your Greek and Natural Philosophy: for observe, if you shall undertake the project, it is not a common Tom Bogs[1] or Parliament[2]

[1] *i.e.* Tom of Bogside.

[2] Dr. Little, nicknamed Parliament and Parliament Geordie.

that I will have you become, but a medical *savant* at length, bringing to bear upon his own science the mind of a man improved by literature and science in general, and looking forward to respectability in life, not merely because of a mechanical skill in his own particular trade, but also because of a general refinement of character, and a superiority both of intellectual and moral deportment. I beg you will think of this, with all solidity, as soon as possible.

If you go to Mainhill to-morrow, you will get large news of me, arrived two days before, by way of Farries: you will also find your Book V. of *Legendre*, which I took care to enclose among the letters for home. There is no change in my situation since that period. I am going along in the old style, my life marked by no incident worth remembering, but happy on the whole, and peaceful and diligent in one way or another. . . . Give my kindest affection to our Father and Mother and all of them at Mainhill.—I am, always yours,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

C.—To JOHN A. CARLYLE, Annan.

3 MORAY STREET, *25th July* 1822.

MY DEAR JACK— . . . Since I wrote to you last, and even since I wrote to my Father not many hours ago, there is a kind of change in my situation, which may be worth communicating. I am now engaged with the Bullers, whom I conversed with for a long time yesternight; and I expect, in two weeks at farthest, to have commenced my regular line of proceeding in their family, and so to continue it for one twelvemonth at least. I like the people much; Mrs. B. in particular seems one of the most fascinating refined women I have ever seen; nor is the Goodman far behind her in his own particular walk—that of an honest, worthy, straightforward English Gentleman,—which, however, is a character that one naturally feels more disposed to value than admire. The terms are the same as were first talked of—or rather nothing at all was said on that subject; with this single difference, that as they have found it quite impossible to get a

house large enough for their establishment, it was agreed upon between us, that I should have a lodging of my own to sleep in in the neighbourhood, to which I might retire at nights after passing the day with them. By this arrangement, you see,—in which I found quite as much to attract as repel—you and I shall have the pleasure of living together next winter—which I know will be far from a slight pleasure to either of us. We shall thus enjoy all the benefits of mutual intercourse and fraternal sympathy; we may advise together, learn together, rejoice together, condole together, or do whatever we choose, in honesty.

Things being so ordered, I can take up the subject of your medical enterprise with a freer hand and clearer vision. Considering your alacrity in the prospective study of this science, there is hardly anything but the pressing danger of your being stopped by the *res angusta domi*, which could have made me hesitate in advising you to set your mind towards it forthwith. That danger is now in a great degree withdrawn. Knowing your qualities

natural and acquired, I can have no doubt about your ability to conquer all the intellectual difficulties of the business, when you have no other to strive with; and therefore I give it as my frank opinion that this profession is the best channel of exertion I can see for you. The question, where you shall turn this knowledge when acquired to account—is no doubt a natural subject of anxiety; but it ought not by any means to operate as a bar to your attempt. Every department of human life is crowded with aspirants at present—and has always been so, I suppose; the medical department is not less crowded than others; but no other that I know of presents so fair a field for adventure. The Physician's scene of action is not confined (like the Lawyer's or the Clergyman's) to this country or to that: it extends over all the inhabited globe; wherever men exist, they are liable to diseases; and ready to reward the person who is able to alleviate them. In Britain at present there are many modes of turning such knowledge to account besides practising it in a country town: there is the

Navy, the Army, India, and a thousand other channels. Nor is it correct to take the riotous apothecaries of Annandale as a specimen of the medical profession in our country towns. I cordially agree with you in utterly rejecting and despising such a life as theirs generally is: I had rather be at once and honestly a genuine unpretending cobbler or street-porter, than combine the character and intellect of a cobbler with the dress and title of a man of science; to which they generally add the morals and manners of a Bawdy-house bully. This will never do; nor need it. There has been a Sydenham, a Mead, a Darwin, a Gregory in Medicine; there still are a Baillie, a Moore, and many other persons whose names would do honour to any class of intellectual and moral men: several of these have spent their lives in provincial towns; and depend upon it, there is still enough of good feeling and taste left in the land to secure even in country towns a proper degree of reverence for depth of understanding and nobleness of conduct whenever they are visibly and habitually displayed. In Medicine,

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too, the fair objects of intellectual competition —which I love to see you aiming at—are more thickly scattered than in almost any other branch of science. The number of living Physicians who display anything like cultivated or powerful understandings is the most limited imaginable, and the number of objects in their science which calls for investigation about the most numerous. So that if a man is ambitious of scientific distinction—here, if he has any claim to seize it, it hangs in larger clusters than almost anywhere else.

All which reasons, my beloved Jack, I would have thee to study and con over and over; and if they weigh in thy immense Tron-beam[1] of an understanding,—to determine on combining, this very winter, the study of Anatomy and Chemistry, at all events the latter, with the pursuit of Greek, Latin, and Natural Philosophy. Write to me forthwith what is thy opinion. For the present, I leave it.

I am just in the act of getting done with

[1] Scales. (The ancient weighing-machine at the Trongate of Edinburgh was so named.)

that thrice wearisome *Legendre.* Brewster talks of settling with me for it; otherwise I should very gladly have asked for money, and the more so as I have actually been destitute of that needful commodity for many weeks. The Landlady thinks I am so idle I will not settle with her; she is in easy circumstances, and cares not. I hoped to get home almost directly, yesterday: but I find it cannot be for several weeks at any rate, and then only during a short space. Tell our good Mother that I am going to send her all the linens home for bleaching. The new shirts I would have made with very fine *linen* necks, if convenient—if not, not. I also want a few neckcloths (like the last double ones); for which I desire you to give our Mother whatever money she wants, in my name. . . . .

They need not send me any more boxes at present; but if you can find Schiller's Tragedy of *Wilhelm Tell,* I wish you would send it up, in the next bundle of clothes. Perhaps it will surprise you to learn that Oliver and Boyd have agreed to go half with me in printing a

poetical Translation of this work! I have sometimes tried a little jingle last winter, and found it do me no hurt at all. *Tell*, however, is still *in dubio.* Write to me very soon. Where is the Targer?[1] Good-night!—Yours always,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

CI.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

3 MORAY STREET, *Monday night* [*July* 1822].

MY DEAR FRIEND—After a very admirable display of patience, I was rewarded one evening, while I thought of no such thing, by the sight of your much-valued packet. "That Ass" I never liked; but then I absolutely hated her, and wished fervently that she had either delivered you from her inane presence altogether, or at least timed her visit better. As it is, I give you thanks from the heart for your letter. It is quite delightful, in its way, for me to enjoy those little peeps you afford me here and there into your domestic doings. I

[1] James Johnstone's nickname (meaning a tall sweeping figure).

see the "feathers" overshadowing your hat; I tremble at the "four angry notes" inflicted on your dressmaker; imagine the "nose and ear" of the conqueror of the Goths; and think what I would give to hear you practising never so "badly" the Themas of Mozart and Beethoven. It is when letters are thrown off in that gay cheerful social way, that one has some pleasure in them.

I viewed your poetical despatches with a feeling made up of pleasure and surprise. This is greatly the best collection you have ever shown me: if you go on at anything like the same rate, I indeed may wish you "a good journey"—but I shall not the less rejoice at your reaching the promised land—though myself still lingering in the wilderness. In fact I am quite ashamed, on considering your verses, to compare them, either in quantity or quality, with my own performance in the same period. I am certainly an idle knave; and shall never rhyme, or do anything else, to right purpose. Your "Wish" is quite an emblem of your usual treacherous disposition. There you go on per-

suading us that you are growing a delightful romantic character—alive to all the simple enjoyments of existence—and prizing them above all others as they ought to be; and when you have fairly *led us in,* and we are beginning to admire you in good earnest,—we hear a suppressed titter, which dissipates the whole illusion, and tells us that we are—poor fools! I like the accompanying pieces better; the lines beginning with "I love" the best of all. In these the ideas are brilliant, the language emphatic and sonorous, the rhythm very musical and appropriate. The little epigram from the Provençal Satyrist is also a favourite with me: it seems to be rendered with great spirit and liveliness. Ferdusi and the hesitating lover are subjects which interest me less; but you have succeeded in translating both extremely well.

It is truly gratifying to me to contemplate you advancing so rapidly in the path of mental culture. Proceed as you have begun; and I shall yet see the day, when I may ask with pride: Did not I predict this? There are a thousand peculiar obstacles—a thousand

peculiar miseries that attend upon a life devoted to the task of observing and feeling, and recording its observations and feelings—but any ray of genius, however feeble, is the "inspired gift of God;" and woe to him or her that hides the talent in a napkin! that allows indolence or sordid aims to prevent the exercise of it, in the way designed by our all-bountiful Parent—the elevation of our own nature, and the delight or instruction of our fellow-mortals —on a scale proportioned to our power! And look to the reward, even in the life that now is! Kings and Potentates are a gaudy folk that flaunt about with plumes and ribbons to decorate them, and catch the coarse admiration of the many-headed monster, for a brief season—then sink into forgetfulness or often to a remembrance even worse: but the Miltons, the de Staëls—these *are* the very salt of the Earth; they derive their "patents of nobility direct from Almighty God," and live in the bosoms of all true men to all ages.

Alas! that it is so much easier to talk thus than to act in conformity to such rational

maxims! I verily believe you are quite right in your estimate of me: I seem indeed to be a mere talker—a *vox et preterea nihil.* Look at these most unspeakable jingles that I have sent you; and see the whole fruit of my labours since I wrote last. I declare it is shameful in myself; and barbarous in those stupid louts that waste my time away in their drivelling. Here was the best-natured and opaquest of Glasgow merchants with me for a whole week! He talked and—— But why should I trouble you with it? Simply, I say this must not last. In a few weeks I shall be done with that blessed treatise on Geometry; and then, if I do not *attempt* at least, I deserve to die as a fool dieth.

These are shadows: let us turn to the sunshine. The *Siege of Carcassonne* will hardly do, I fear; though you show a right spirit in aiming at it. The persecution of the Albigenses has little to distinguish it from other persecutions more connected with our sympathies, except a darker tinge of bloody-mindedness, and a degree of callous ferocity which would tend rather to disgust the mind, than to inflame

or exalt it. Simon de Montfort and Fouquet are horrible rather more than tragical. To be sure the Count is a fine subject: but there are no peculiar incidents to work upon, and to paint the manners and feelings of those people, even if they were worth painting, would involve you in long laborious researches which would yield no fruit proportionate to the toil of gathering it. I rather advise you, therefore, to dismiss the subject altogether. Yet if you feel any deep emotions, see any magnificence of accompaniment which you could combine with it,—tell me, and I will search you out all the information possible. So much depends on the natural bent of your own inclination—it is so important to have this along with you in whatever you undertake, that a suggestion of your own should be preferred under many disadvantages to one from any other. A subject from our own history would answer best—if we must have a historical subject. But why not one of pure invention? or why not try a comedy, originating wholly incidents and characters from yourself?

You do not mention what Play of Schiller's you are reading, or whether I can help you in it at all. You also forget to select any theme for our next poetical effort; a speculation, in which, though as I have said, you are going to leave me entirely behind, I feel determined to go on. What if we trust to Fortune next time, and engage only to write *something*—name not given? I hope you will not keep me long: it was very kind in you to think of my wishes, and send the *first* volume the moment it was finished. I would not harass you or burden you, however, with my impatience, write to me when you *can;* only think, if I were an absolute Monarch, *how* often I would have you write. . . .

But surely I must conclude this most ugly and absurd of letters. I beg you to believe that I have not been so stupid for six months—sore throat, etc. etc., have quite undone me for some days. You will write when you have done with *Bracebridge Hall,* and send me your verses. The rest of Sismondi I shall transmit forthwith. If you cannot conveniently read Wash-

ington [Irving] without farther cutting the leaves—do it without scruple.

Farewell! I am half asleep—so excuse my blunders and miserable penmanship.—I am always yours,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

CII.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

3 MORAY STREET, *Thursday* [1822].

MY DEAR FRIEND—Unless some one has anticipated me in regard to this *Voice from St. Helena*, I calculate on furnishing you with some amusement, by introducing you to the sound of it. O'Meara's work presents your favourite under somewhat of a new aspect: it has increased my respect for Napoleon, and my indignation against his *Boje*. Since the days of Prometheus Vinctus, I recollect of no spectacle more moving and sublime, than that of this great man in his dreary prison-house; given over to the very scum of the species to be tormented by every sort of indignity, which the heart most revolts against;—captive, sick, despised, forsaken;—yet rising above it all, by

the stern force of his own unconquerable spirit, and hurling back on his mean oppressors the ignominy they strove to load him with. I declare I could almost love the man. His native sense of honesty, the rude genuine strength of his intellect, his lively fancy, his sardonic humour, must have rendered him a most original and interesting companion; he might have been among the first writers of his age, if he had not chosen to be the very first conqueror of any age. Nor is this gigantic character without his touches of human affection—his simple attachments, his little tastes and kindly predilections—which enhance the respect of meaner mortals by uniting it with their love. I do not even believe him to have been a very wicked man; I rather——But it is needless to keep you from the book itself with this *palabra*. Send me word if you would like to see the second volume; which in the affirmative case you shall have, so soon as Mrs. Buller has done with it. This lady likes Napoleon even better than you do; made a pilgrimage to his grave,

stole sprigs of willow from it, etc.; and called him the greatest of men in the presence of Mr. Croker himself. I am sorry, however, that I cannot bring her to a right sense of Byron's merit; she affirms that none admire that nobleman, so much as boarding-school girls and young men under twenty—which she reckons a sure sign of his being partly a *charlatan*. . . .

I have some doggerel translations, etc., which I meant to send; but they are not fit to be seen by you—perhaps never will. When shall I get your productions? I have no right to be impatient, but these two weeks have seemed very long.

I am not happy at present; and for the best of all reasons, I stand very low in my own esteem. Something must be done, if I would not sink into a mere driveller. For the last three years I have lived as under an accursed spell—how wretched, how vainly so, I need not say.[1] If nothing even now is to

[1] "Other things," wrote Carlyle, in recalling in late years this period, "with one precious thing, clearly in my favour,

come of it, then I had better have been anything than what I am. But talking is superfluous: I only beg for a little respite, before you mark me down for ever, as an unhappy dunce, distinguished from other dunces only by the height of my aims and the clamour of my pretensions.

Will you not write to me soon? It were a kind act.—I am, always your affectionate friend,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

CIII.—To his FATHER, Mainhill.

3 MORAY STREET, *16th October* 1822.

MY DEAR FATHER—On coming out of my temporary abode in India Street, I was met to-day about noon by the good Jack, holding

might have made me hopeful and cheerful as beseemed my years,—had not *Dyspepsia*, with its base and unspeakable miseries, kept such fatal hold of me. Which perhaps needed only a *wise* Doctor, too, as I found afterwards, when too late! Heavy, grinding, and continual has that burden lain on me ever since to this hour, and will lie; but I must not complain of it, either; it was not wholly a *curse*, as I can sometimes recognise, but perhaps a thing needed, and partly a *blessing*, though a stern one, and bitter to flesh and blood."

in his hands a letter, on which I was happy to recognise your well-known handwriting. By the aid of my "learning" and other faculties, I succeeded without difficulty not only in "making out" the epistle, but also in deriving great pleasure from the task of doing so. We next proceeded to a Book-shop, and procured the work you asked for,—along with some Bibles for the other branches of the family, and two small memorials, the one for Jane, the other for Jenny. I am now down writing with all the speed I can, hoping to make out a letter for you before the hour of my departure arrive; and careful rather of the quantity than the quality of what I say—which I know is your principle also.

I am very sorry to hear of Alick's bad success in the matter of horse-buying—the more so, as I conceived that a long experience in the dishonesties of Jockies had fortified him against imposition from that knavish set of people. I trust, however, that before this time he is returned with a satisfactory adjustment of all difficulties; and enriched in caution far beyond

what he is impoverished in money. After all, to mistake at times is the common lot of mankind; and Alick has committed fewer errors than most people so circumstanced would have done. . . .

But I am fast filling up my allotted space, with reflections which you yourself have made a hundred times; instead of giving you some details about myself, which I know you greatly prefer. Happily my duty on this head may be soon discharged. I am still in the same state of comfort which I described myself to be enjoying last time I wrote. The people are very agreeable and kind to me; the pupils go on at a reasonable rate in their studies: in short all is very nearly as it should be. I have sometimes a day of languor and bilious disquietude; but in that respect also I am improving; and a strict attention to the results of former experience is generally sufficient to guard against any considerable inconvenience. I have not lost half a night's sleep since I returned to Edinburgh.

All this is very pleasant in the meantime;

and may continue to be so for a good while to come: yet I should be a very stupid person if I set my ultimate hopes upon it, and did not look beyond the period of its termination to a fresh scene of exertions and wants, which it behoves me at present to be making every effort to provide against. Accordingly, my chief desire now is that I were fairly engaged in the execution of some enterprise which might present a likelihood of being permanently and substantially useful to me. I am trying all that in me lies to fix upon some literary undertaking of the sort referred to; and I expect to find no complete rest—indeed I wish to find none—until I am fairly overhead in the composition of some *valuable* Book; a project which I have talked about till I am ashamed, and shall therefore say no more concerning it at this time.

Jack's presence here I find to be very agreeable to me. He is a quiet, diligent, friendly soul as ever broke bread: it is pleasant to me to find his broad placid face looking forth goodwill to me, when I return from the day's exertions. I think he has a good chance to fall

into teaching in Edinburgh; and get himself qualified for earning his bread in some independent and respectable station; a purpose which he himself is anxious even more than enough to accomplish. Of his final success I have no doubt.

There is nothing in the shape of news that I can send you from our City at present: the place seems very quiet, and what little stir there does exist in it very rarely comes the length of my abode. In Edinburgh, properly so called, I do not appear once in the fortnight. My path from India Street and to it supplies me with bodily exercise sufficient; and it leads me away by a succession of clean, well-paved streets up the very back of the New Town, where I feel too happy to escape the noise and smoke of the old black Harlot, ever to give myself much trouble about what is passing within her precincts.

While I was writing—about five minutes ago, the Carrier Geordie came to say or rather to try to say that he could not take up the box to-day. I sent my Mother's spectacles along

with him, and a pair of shoes which must be returned to Shaw at Dumfries, being uselessly little. If he can make a bigger pair and stronger he may send them. Jack is going up with the books—which you will distribute according to the addresses with my most affectionate compliments to the several owners, all of whom I would gladly have written to had my time in any measure allowed me. I must now conclude my scrawling, with the hope to hear from you soon and more at large—having no subject nearer my heart than the welfare of one and all of you.—I am ever, my dear Father, your affectionate son,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

CIV.—To his MOTHER, Mainhill.

EDINBURGH, *Wednesday night*
[*October* 1822.]

MY DEAR MOTHER—I have literally only ten minutes to write you in; but knowing your mind in that respect, I think it better to send you the smallest note in the world rather than none at all; and accordingly I am at work,

writing with as much spirit as if I had an hour before me.

One reason that impels me is the wish I feel to have more precise and certain information about the state of your health and spirits than I have obtained for some weeks: and next time the Carrier comes out, I expect to hear a minute account of the condition in which you find yourself, now that the hurly-burly of harvest is over, and you have leisure to collect yourself so far as to consider and say how it actually fares with you. I will hope that you study by all means to make yourself comfortable, and keep the measure of health that is allowed you; and which you cannot doubt is a greater blessing to all of us than we have in the world besides. I give you the most strict injunction to be no moment in want of anything which I can procure for you. I should think it the worst usage you could give me, if you yielded to the voice of any foolish scruple in such a case, and held your peace when any effort of mine might help you. What is there in this world that is half so valuable to us as to love one another, and to

live in the hope of loving one another for ever? I do entreat of you to let me know whenever I can serve you in the smallest matter. The spectacles we have sent down: they seem not a jot the worse; and having two pairs, you will now be enabled to sew, etc., with the inferior pair, keeping the *bettermost* for Church and other such occasions.

Tell me truly, do you get tea every day? If you do not, I *command* you (being a man skilful in such matters, and therefore entitled to command) to get into the practice of habitually taking it, without delay. I know it is useful to you; and it would spoil the taste of my own to think that you were unserved.

But my time is elapsed, and I must run. It is half-past five, and I have not dined yet! I designed to send you a long discussion about these *greet folk* some day soon. They do not seem a whit happier than you—not a single whit.

Give my respects and love to all the people about Mainhill. We have a hope to see you here in winter! Adieu, my dear Mother!—I am ever yours,

TH. CARLYLE.

CV.—To his FATHER, Mainhill.

3 MORAY STREET, *4th December* 1822.

MY DEAR FATHER—I know not whether strictly speaking I owe you a letter in the fair way of one for one, as traders count; but certainly in every other way of reckoning I should have written to you long ago. . . .

We have heard so scantily from home that we can only form an imperfect guess at what is going on there. The most important thing, however, the fact of your continued health and general welfare we have learned; and that is everything. In other respects I suppose you to be struggling away making what head you can against these meagre times, the pressure of which all men are feeling. How it will end I cannot see or form any conjecture. I observe they are making movements in the South; but showing thereby only that they feel the evil, not that they know how to remedy it. Meanwhile industry and thrift, the only shield and sword by which the tyrant Necessity can be met and vanquished, are not wanting on your

part; you have only to await the issue patiently, happy that you are so little involved in it. There will be many a ruined man before twelve months go round again.

You have not told me whether you liked the sermons. If there is any other book you stand in want of, or at all care about having, it will be a pleasure for me to get it for you. I think you do very well to read in the winter nights; they are tedious otherwise; and of all states for a mortal man, the unhappiest is where his mind, requiring constant employment and a continuous flow of ideas, can find nothing to employ it. There are some good books in the Ecclefechan Library, which I think you would like if you tried them.

Having written so largely and frequently of late, little remains for me at present to communicate in the shape of news about my situation or proceedings. I find my health slowly but gradually improving; the duties I have to go through are of an easy sort; the people are on the whole very agreeable: so that I am as happy and contented as I could expect to be.

The old squire Buller is a great favourite with me; a downright, true, unaffected, honest Englishman as I would wish to see. We meet not above once or twice a week; but we are always very blithe when we do meet, we talk and speculate about politics and learned men and morals and letters and things in general; we are very comfortable in spite of his deafness, which disturbs the pleasure of conversation somewhat, particularly at first. . . .

A while ago, one Galloway whom I knew here invited me to become a candidate for a vacant Professorship in the Royal Military College at Sandhurst away beyond London, where he now is. It is to teach Mathematics; the salary is about £200 a year with house and garden; the labour is not great; the whole establishment is under Government. I wrote to inquire farther about it; but have not yet received any answer. I do not think I shall mind it much; though it is good to have such a thing before one. . . .

But I must conclude this scrawl, with a petition for a letter from you the first time you

can prevail upon yourself to write. If you knew how much pleasure we take in your letters you would send us more of them. Jack would have written to you by this opportunity, but he has no moment of time left now. He will mend the matter next chance.—I remain, my dear Father, your affectionate son,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

CVI.—To his MOTHER, Mainhill.

3 MORAY STREET, *4th December* [1822].

MY DEAR MOTHER—It is already past twelve o'clock, and I am tired and sleepy; but I cannot go to rest without answering the kind little note which you sent me, and acknowledging these new instances of your unwearied attention to my interests and comfort. I rejoice to be assured that you still retain a moderate share of health: watch over it, my dear Mother, as the first of earthly blessings. It will give you a genuine satisfaction to know in return that I am daily improving in that point myself. In another twelvemonth, I expect to be completely

whole. Disorders which have been accumulating long must be long in curing: but to be assured that one is recovering is almost as good as to be recovered.

I am almost vexed at these shirts and stockings: I had already as many as I could set my face to. My dear Mother, why will you expend in these superfluities the pittance I intended for very different ends? I again assure you, and would swear it if needful, that you cannot get me such enjoyment with it in any way as by convincing me that it is adding to your own. Do not therefore frustrate my purposes: when I want any more shirts, etc., I will not be slack in letting you know.

I send you a small *screed* of verses, which I made some time ago: I fear you will not care a doit for them, though the subject is good—the deliverance of Switzerland from tyranny by the hardy mountaineers at the battle of Morgarten some five hundred years ago.

This is my birthday: I am now seven and twenty years of age! What an unprofitable lout I am! What have I done in this world to

make good my place in it, or reward those that had the trouble of my upbringing? Great part of an ordinary lifetime is gone by: and here am I, poor trifler, still sojourning in Meshech, still dwelling among the tents of Kedar! May the great Father of all give me strength to do better in time remaining, to be of service in the good cause in my day and generation, and "having finished the work which was given me to do," to lie down and sleep in peace and purity in the hope of a happy rising! Amen!

But I have done. Good-night, my dear Mother! I wish you sweet sleep and all blessings.—Your affectionate son,

TH. CARLYLE.

Give my affectionate respects to all the brothers and sisters; and tell them sharply to write to me. What are they dallying about?

CVII.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

3 MORAY STREET, *16th December* 1822.

MY DEAR FRIEND—I am doubly vexed at

the large mass of soiled paper which you receive along with this;—both because of its natural qualities, and because it has detained me a whole week from writing to you. I have need of motives for exertion; and I wished to keep this prospect before me throughout my stupid task. It is at last accomplished, and I am now to reap my reward.

My dear Friend, if you do not grow more cross with me soon, I shall become an entire fool. When I get one of those charming kind letters it puts me into such a humour as you cannot conceive: I read it over till I can almost say it by heart; then sit brooding in a delicious idleness, or go wandering about in solitary places, dreaming over things—which never can be more than dreams. May Heaven reward you for the beautiful little jewel you have sent me! How demurely it was lying in its place, when I opened the letter,—bright and pure and sparkling as its mistress! I design to keep it as long as I live; to look on it after many years, when

we perhaps are far asunder,—that I may enjoy the delights of memory when those of hope are passed away. You are indeed very kind to me: would it were in my power to repay you, as I ought!

I thank you for the clear outline you have traced to me of your daily life: it gratifies me by the persuasion of your diligence, and enables me to conceive your employment at any hour I like. Even now I can see you—time of "playing with Shandy or your reticule" being past, bending over your Rollin with lexicons and maps and all your apparatus lying round —toiling, striving, subduing the repugnances within, resisting the allurements to dissipation from without—vehemently, steadfastly intent on scaling the rocky steep "where Fame's proud temple shines afar." It is well done, my dear and honoured Jane! Go on in this noble undertaking; it is worthy of your efforts: persevere in it, and your success is certain.

I always knew you to be a deceitful person, full of devices and inexplicable turns: but who could have thought you would show so much

contrivance in the plain process of getting on with your studies? To "sew skirts and waists together," to discard and combine, so that you accomplish in ten minutes what to an ordinary *belle* is the great business of her day! And then how convenient to have letters to write (bless you for being so good a correspondent to me, *in truth!*)—to take cold so exactly in the nick of time! I believe I ought to send you out Andrew Thomson's Sermon on the gross sinfulness of bidding your servant say *not at home*, or give you a lecture on that solemn point myself; but so it is, you have such a way of setting things forth, that do what you will I cannot get angry at you—I must just submit. Still, however, I must seriously protest against the over-labour which you describe: it is greatly more than you are fit for; and I heartily pray that some interruption may occur every second evening, to drive you away from books and papers, to make you talk and laugh and enjoy yourself, though it were but with the "*imbecilles*" who drink tea and play whist in such a place as Haddington. You

ought to thank your stars that you are so circumstanced: if left to yourself with that fervent temper and that delicate frame, you would be ruined by excessive exertion in twelve months. This to an absolute certainty. For the rest, I rejoice that you are proceeding so rapidly with M. Rollin, and gathering so many ideas even from that slender source. I love you for admiring Socrates, and determining to be a philosopher like him; though I do wish that your nascent purposes may sustain no more shocks so rude as the one you mention. Have you found the amethyst? I question if there are a dozen philosophers in this country that could bear such a trial much better than you bore it. After all, it is a fine thing to be a *lover of wisdom:* yet there was also a good deal of justness in your version of the *quantis non egeo*, which I once got from you as we walked along Princes Street, and which has often brought a smile across me since. "How many things are here which I do not want," said I, affecting to be a philosopher; "How many things are here which I cannot

get," said Jane, speaking the honest language of nature, and slyly unmasking my philosophy. The truth is, everything has two faces: both these sentiments are correct in their proper season, both erroneous out of it.

It is certainly a pity that M. Rollin should be so very weak a man. He moralises to the end of the chapter, and all his morality is not worth a doit. Yet you will [get] many useful thoughts from him, many splendid pictures of men and things,—of a mode of life which was not only highly interesting in itself, but also which has formed the basis of many principles that still give a deep colour to the speculations and literature of all civilised nations, and which is therefore worthy of your study in a double point of view. You must continue in him to the conclusion; you will get better guides through other portions of your pilgrimage. In the meantime, as I am anxious to reward the industry you have already shown, I propose that by way of vacation you shall suspend the perusal of M. Rollin, whenever you are through the seventh volume, which most likely you now

are—for the period of three days, till you examine this Novel which I have sent you. Three days will do the whole business, and you will go on with greater spirit afterwards. You see I am not absolutely without mercy in my nature; I would not kill you all at once. In this *Anastasius* I hope you will find something to amuse you, perhaps to instruct; it will at least give you the picture of a robust and vigorous mind, that has seen much, and that wants not some touches of poetry to describe it eloquently, or some powers of intellect to reflect well upon it. I enjoyed *Anastasius* the "Oriental *Gil Blas*" very much. Let no man despair that has read this book! In the year 1810 Mr. Thomas Hope brought forth a large publication upon fire-screens and fenders and tapestry and tea-urns and other upholstery matters which seemed to be the very acme of dulness and affectation; ten years afterwards he named himself the author of a book which few living writers would be ashamed to own. Let us persist, my friend, without weariness or wavering!

Perseverance will conquer *every* obstacle.—It is right in you to employ some portion of your time in light reading: this too you may turn to advantage as well as pleasure. Have you read all Pope's works? Swift's? Dryden's, and the other classics of that age? Tell me, and I shall know better what to send you out. There is no way of acquiring a proper mastery of the resources contained in our English language, without studying these and the older writers in it. Many of them also are exceedingly amusing and instructive. What are you doing with *Wallenstein?* I will send you *Faust* whenever you have finished: I fear you will not like it so well as you expect—or will think I have misled you: but you shall try. I admire your inflexibility in the reading of *Tacitus;* it is a hard effort, one which few in your circumstances would be capable of making. Do not toil too much over it.

But I must not trifle away your paper and time in this manner: I promised to send you some intelligence about our *opus magnum,* an enterprise which, too like the *great work* of the

Alchemist, appears to be attended with unspeakable preparation and discussion, and with no result at all. I must now tell you what I can say on the subject. You will be very angry at me; but nevertheless I must go through with my detail. One virtue at least I may lay some claim to, the virtue of candour; since to you, whose good opinion it is about my very highest ambition to acquire, I am brave enough to disclose myself as the most feeble and vacillating mortal in existence. Perhaps you will impute this practice less to the absence of hypocrisy than to the presence of a strong wish to talk; perhaps with reason. *On veut mieux dire du mal de soi-même que de n'en point parler.* So says La Rochefoucault. Be as merciful to me as you can; and you shall hear.

After writing the last long letter to you, I seriously inclined myself to the concoction of some project in the execution of which we two should go hand in hand. I formed a kind of plan, and actually commenced the filling of it up. We were to write a most eminent novel

in concert: it was to proceed by way of letters; I to take the gentleman, you the lady. The poor fellow was to be a very excellent character of course; a man in the middle ranks of life, gifted with good talents and a fervid enthusiastic turn of mind, learned in all sciences, practised in many virtues,—but tired out, at the time I took him up, with the impediments of a world by much too prosaic for him, entirely sick of struggling along the sordid bustle of existence, where he could glean so little enjoyment but found so much acute suffering. He had, in fact, met with no object worthy of all his admiration, the bloom of novelty was worn off, and no more substantial charm of solid usefulness had called on him to mingle in the business of life: he was very wretched and very ill-natured; had determined at last to bid adieu to the hollow and contemptible progeny of Adam as far as possible—to immure himself in rustic solitude, with a family of simple unaffected but polished and religious people who (by some means) were bound in gratitude to cherish him affectionately, and who like him

had bid farewell to the world. Here the hypochondriac was to wander about for a time over the hill-country, to muse and meditate upon the aspects of nature and his own soul, to meet with persons and incidents which should call upon him to deliver his views upon many points of science, literature, and morals. At length he must grow tired of science, and nature, and simplicity just as he had of towns; sickening by degrees till his heart is full of bitterness and ennui, he speaks forth his sufferings—not in the puling Lake-style—but with a tongue of fire—sharp, sarcastic, apparently unfeeling, yet all the while betokening to the quick-sighted a mind of lofty thoughts and generous affections smarting under the torment of its own over-nobleness, and ready to break in pieces by the force of its own energies. Already all seems over with him, he has hinted about suicide, and rejected it scornfully—but it is evident he cannot long exist in this, to him, most blasted, waste and lonely world,—when *you*—that is, the heroine—come skipping in before him with your *espièglerie*s and fervency, your "becks and

wreathed smiles," and all your native loveliness. Why should I talk? The man immediately turns crazy about you. The sole being he has ever truly loved, the sole being he can ever love; the epitome to him of all celestial things, the shining jewel in which he sees reflected all the pleasures of the universe, the sun that has risen to illuminate his world when it seemed to be overshadowed in darkness for ever! The earth again grows green beneath his feet, his soul recovers all its fiery energies, he is prepared to front death and danger, to wrestle with devils and men, that he may gain your favour. For a while you laugh at him, and torment him, but at length take pity on the poor fellow, and grow as serious as he is. Then, oh then! what a more than elysian prospect! But alas! Fate, etc., obstacles, etc. etc. You are both broken-hearted, and die; and the whole closes with a mortcloth, and Mr. Trotter and a company of undertakers.

I had fairly begun this thing, written two first letters; and got the man set down in a very delightful part of the country. But I

could not get along: I found that we should require to see one another and consult together every day; I grew affrighted and chilled at the aspect of the Public; I wrote with no *verve:* I threw it all into the fire. Yet I am almost persuaded that we might accomplish such a thing; nay I often vow that we *will* accomplish it yet, before all is done: but first we must have better auspices, we must be more near each other, we must learn to write more flowingly. What then was to be tried? I thought of a series of short tales, essays, sketches, miscellanies. You are to record your thoughts and observations and experience in this way, I mine. Begin, therefore; and let me have a little story with descriptions of manners and scenery and passion and character in the Highlands or Lowlands, or wherever you like best and feel yourself most at home. Do not say you cannot: write as you are used to write in those delightful cunning little lively epistles you send me, and the thing we want is found. I too will write in my own poor vein, neither fast nor well, but stedfastly and stubbornly: in

time we shall both improve: and when we have enough accumulated for a volume, then we shall sift the wheat from the chaff, arrange it in concert sitting side by side, and give it to the world fearlessly, secure of *two* suffrages at least, and prepared to let the others come or stay as they like best. Now will you do this? Think of it well, then give me your approval; you shall be my task-mistress, and I promise to obey you as a most faithful vassal. Consider it; and tell me next time that you have *begun* to work.

The stupid farrago which you receive along with this is *the first of the series!* Do not absolutely condemn me for that lumbering piebald composition. A man must write a cartload of trash before he can produce a handful of excellence. This story might have been mended in the names and many of the incidents, but it was not worth the labour: I gave it as I heard it. It is a *sooterkin*, and must remain so. I scarcely expect you will read it through.

Now, my dear Friend, my time is done and I must leave you. I could sit and talk with

you here for ever; but the world has other humbler tasks in it. I had many things more to tell you, had not my irregular confused mode of writing exhausted all my room. There is not a word more of Sandhurst: I understand the man is to be here at Christmas, and tell me all verbatim. You would not have me go? Jack is delighted with your compliments—delighted that you should know such a being as he exists in the world. He bids me return his kind and humble services, and hopes to know more of you before the end. He is a good soul, and affords me some enjoyment here—a well-formed mind too, but *rudis indigesta*—much more placid and contented and well-conditioned than the unfortunate person you have made a friend of.

Now *do* not be long in writing to me. If you knew how much your letters charm me, you would not grudge your labour. Write to me without reserve—about *all* that you care for—not minding what you say or how you say it. Related as we are, dulness itself is often best of all, for it shows that we are friends and

put confidence in one another. What an impudent knave I am to ask this of you, to affect to be on such terms with you! It is your own kind way of treating me that causes it. I have often upbraided fortune; but here I ought to call her the best of patronesses. How many men, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unbind, have travelled through the world and found no noble soul to care for them! while I—God bless you, my dear Jane! —if I could deserve to be so treated by you I should be happy. Now you *must* not grow angry at me. Write, write!—I am "hungering and thirsting" to hear of you and all connected with you.—I am ever yours,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

CVIII.—To ALEXANDER CARLYLE, Mainhill.

EDINBURGH, 18*th December* 1822.

MY DEAR ALICK—We got your parcel a few hours ago; and all within it was safe—money and all. I am obliged by your punctuality in that matter. Your letter also, though it was

brief, conveyed to us the most important intelligence, in assuring us that you were all in the "usual way" of health and spirits. I am now to scribble you a few hurried lines by way of reply.

. . . . . .

We live in a very retired manner here, and so, very little of what is called news reaches us at any time. Perhaps about once in the fortnight some student or preacher strays down to see us,—and then goes his way after chatting an hour: but we seldom repay such visits, privacy being the arrangement we prefer on all accounts. They lead a very melancholy life, these poor preachers and teachers; waiting for a quarter of a century in the city before any provision is made for them, struggling all the while to keep soul and body together, and perhaps destined in the long run to see all their expectations of preferment dashed away. There was one Craig, a little withered man, whom I saw once or twice, a teacher of Greek here, that waited long for some kirk or other establishment, was frequently disappointed, and lately

having been more grievously disappointed than ever, took it to heart, and grew low-spirited about it, and is now gone home in a state little if at all short of derangement! I pity the poor body sincerely. Few conditions of life are more oppressive than such a one as this.

Now, my dear Alick, the new year is coming on, and the "storms of winter;" can you or Father or Mother, or any or all of you say anything definite about the visit you half-promised us? We can get you accommodations here, such as they are, without inconvenience in any shape, the warmest welcome you count upon at all times, and we will not let you want a *hurl* up and down in the coach, whenever you like to fix upon a time. I really think you should take the *good-wife* and the *good-man* to task on this matter, and try to persuade them. They *must* see Edinburgh some time; that is flat: why not now as well as afterwards? Write us about this.

Also you must send me word about your readings and studies and all your news and undertakings. Poor Gullen! To be so nearly

eaten up of the Foul Thief, in so ugly a shape! Have they found none of the sacrilegious Kirk-robbers? Write me about all and sundry.—I am ever, my dear Alick, your affectionate brother,

TH. CARLYLE.

CIX.—To his MOTHER, Mainhill.

3 MORAY STREET, *18th December* 1822.

MY DEAR MOTHER—I have still a few minutes' time, and I cannot let the Carrier go without writing you a line or two which, however dull or barren, may at least gratify you by the conviction that I *would* amuse and interest you, if I *could*. . . .

I wish you had learned to write as you proposed last harvest: we should in that case hear more precisely and fully of your situation than we usually do; a circumstance which would greatly enhance the pleasure we always feel at the sight of a packet from home. As it is, I must content myself with general conjectures—trusting that you go on as happily as could be expected, bustling and fighting away as usual,

having many things to suffer and do, but also possessing many resources for suffering them and doing them with courage and equanimity. My dear Mother, I am vexed that you never tell me of anything I can do for you: always doing for *me*, busying yourself for my sake, never showing me the means to add in any respect to *your* happiness. This is not fair: I am sure you know me well enough to be assured that you could not promote my comfort, in the truest sense of the word, more effectually, than putting it within my power to serve you in some shape. Do think, and *tell* me what you want. Are you in the habit of taking tea yet? I fear it [*sic*]: and I again charge you to *begin forthwith*, and I will be answerable for the result. Now mind these are not words, but real injunctions, which you must not disregard. It would be *such* a thing, if you, who have toiled among us so long and faithfully, were restricted from any comfort—become a necessary to one in your situation—which we could procure for you. My dear Mother, this thought would be gall and wormwood to me long afterwards: no

sum of hundreds would make me amends for the presence of it. *Do not* heap it upon my head! consider what I am telling you, and do as I bid you—for it comes earnestly from the heart. Tell me next time that you have begun the tea-system—if you do not wish me to send you *half a stone* of the article down by the first opportunity.

But I am wasting away the paper in this lecture; my time too is all but run, Jack being nearly finished and just on the wing for Candle-maker Row. I wish you would try to write me yourself—however indifferently: you can never learn younger; and I rejoice to see your hand, however rude and crabbed.

What ails all the young people that no soul of them thinks of writing? We might suppose they had all got Palsy or some such distemper. Have they a fear of touching goose-feathers, or are they careless about their Brothers? No! I feel that they are not, but they want some motive to rouse them from their slumber. Tell Mag and Jamie and Mary that I expect to hear from them next time—if it were but with the

"compliments of the season." Are Jane and Jenny at any school? Give my love to all the honest little creatures: I know that all of them like me, though they have not tongues to say it. When is my Father going to write? We half expected to hear from him by this opportunity. But Jack is grunting!—I must bid my dear Mother farewell!

THOMAS CARLYLE.

CX.—To ALEXANDER CARLYLE, Mainhill.

EDINBURGH, *20th December* 1822.

. . . You ask me after Edward Irving; but I have nothing to say about him, or little, except what you know already. Like another Boanerges he is cleaving the hearts of the Londoners in twain, attending Bible Societies, Presbyterian dinners, Religious conventions of all kinds; preaching and speculating and acting so as to gain universal notoriety and very general approbation. Long may he enjoy it! There are few men living that deserve it better. He has written to me only once since he went

away, and has been a letter in my debt for some time; I am expecting payment very soon.

That is a kind of life, which, though prized by many, would not by any means suit my perverted tastes. Popularity is sweet in all cases: but if I were aiming for it in the Pulpit, the idea that a thousand drivellers had gained it more lavishly, that even John Whitfield used to rouse the Londoners from their warm beds, and make them stand in rows, with lanthorns in their hands, crowding the streets that led to his chapel, early in raw wet November mornings—would come withering over my imagination like the mortifying wind of Africa, and as Thomas Bell said in his bold metaphorical way, would "dash the *cup* of fame from my brow." It is happier for me therefore that I live in still shades—shunning the clamorous approval of the many-headed monster as well as avoiding its censure, and determined if ever I be marked out never so slightly from the common herd, to be so by another set of judges. After all it is a blessing little worth coveting; the best and richest part of the most famous man's renown

is the esteem he is held in by those who see him daily in his goings out and comings in, by his friends and relations and those that love himself more than his qualities; and this every one of us may gain, without straying into the thorny paths which guide to glory, either in the region of arts or of arms.

But see where my digressive temper is leading me! The sheet is done, and I have yet said nothing! I had much to ask about yourself and Home—about your employments, studies, thoughts: but I have no room to form my longings into thoughts—far less to *back-spier*[1] you sufficiently on these to me most interesting topics. I wish you would sit down some night when you feel "i' the vein," and give me a full disclosure; describe to me all that is going on in the shape of sentiment or action about Mainhill or the environs, never minding in what order or how, so it be but there. . . . Give my affectionate remembrances to all the true-hearted though too silent population of Mainhill; and wish them in my name a brave new year

1. Cross-question.

better than all that are gone, worse than all that are to follow. They will surely write to me on that stirring occasion.—I am ever your affectionate Brother,

TH. CARLYLE.

CXI.—To MR. R. MITCHELL, Kirkcudbright.

3 MORAY STREET, LEITH WALK,
23d December 1822.

MY DEAR MITCHELL—It is many a day since I wrote to you or heard from you; yet there are few of my early friends whom I have more cause to feel an interest in, few periods of my life that I look back to with more pleasure than the period when our pursuits were more similar, our places of abode more adjacent than they are at present. It is in the hope of recalling old times and thoughts to your memory that I have taken up the pen on this occasion: I am still ambitious for a place in your esteem, still anxious to hear of your welfare.

. . . . . .

It is so long since you have been in Edinburgh, that all except the general interests

connected with the place must have become indifferent to you. I know few people here myself, you I suppose still fewer; and of these even only a very small portion seems to merit much attention. They are getting into Kirks gradually, or lingering on the muddy shore of *Private teaching*, to see if any Charon will waft them across the Styx of Patronage into the Elysium of teinds and glebe. Success attend them all, poor fellows! they are cruising in one small sound, as it were, of the great ocean of life; their trade is harmless, their vessels leaky; it will be hard if they altogether fail.

James Johnstone is gone to Broughty Ferry (Dundee) some weeks ago. He seems to aim at being a Scottish Teacher for life: I think if he stick to it, he must ultimately prosper. In the meantime, however, things wear a very surly aspect with him. He has got planted among a very melancholy race of people—Psalm-singing Captains, devout old women, Tabernacle shoemakers, etc. etc., who wish him to engage in exposition of the Scripture, and various other plans, for the *spread* not of

grammar and accounts, but of the doctrines of Theosophy and Thaumaturgy. It is galling and provoking! You must write to console and encourage poor James: he is a true man as breathes; has no natural friends, and feels at present, I can easily conceive, very lonely and dejected.

For myself, I lead a very quiet life here. The Bullers are exceedingly good people, and what is more comfortable, having still a home of my own, I depend less on their good qualities. I am with them only four hours a day: and I find the task of superintending the studies of my two pupils more pleasing than I had reason to expect. I sit here and read all the morning—or write, regularly burning everything I write. It is a hard matter that one's thoughts should be so poor and scanty, and at the same time the power of uttering them so difficult to acquire. I should be happy, if I were in health—which in about a twelvemonth or so I keep hoping I shall be. I am greatly better than I was, though yet ill enough to break the heart of any but a very obstinate person.

Have you seen the *Liberal?* It is a most happy performance; Byron has a "Vision of Judgment" there, and a letter to the Editor of "My Grandmother's Review," of the wickedest and cleverest turn you could imagine. The Vice Society, or Constitutional Association, are going to prosecute. This is a wild, fighting, loving, praying, blaspheming, weeping, laughing sort of world! The *literati* and *literatuli* with us are wrangling and scribbling; but effecting nothing, except to "make the day and way alike long." At present, however, it is mine to make the sheet and story alike long; a duty I seem in danger of forgetting. Write to me whenever you can spare an hour: I want to have all your news, your difficulties and successes, your hopes and fears, a picture of your whole *manière d'être.* Salute Mr. Low in my name.—I am always, my dear Mitchell, your sincere friend,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

CXII.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

3 MORAY STREET, 25*th December* 1822.

MY DEAR FRIEND—I got your parcel about two hours ago. I had been living for the last week in the dread of a lecture; I now think it happy that I am quit so easily. It is very true I am a kind of *ineptus;* and when I sit down to write letters to people that I care anything for, I am too apt to get into a certain ebullient humour, and so to indite great quantities of nonsense, which even my own judgment condemns—when too late for being mended. The longer I live, the more clearly do I see that Corporal Nym's maxim is the great elixir of Philosophy, the quintessence of all moral doctrine. *Pauca verba, pauca verba* is the only remedy we can apply to all the excesses and irregularities of the head and heart. *Pauca verba,* then!

You are too late by a day in asking for *Faust.* It is not to be got in the bookshops here, and the College library is shut for the Christmas holidays. You shall have the

volume on the 2d or 3d of January. In the meantime, I have sent you *Tell* and the *Bride of Messina*, the former of which Schiller's critics have praised greatly; generally condemning the latter as written upon a false system, though with immense care and labour. I was disappointed in *Tell*; it struck me as too disjointed and heterogeneous, though there are excellent views of Swiss life in it, and Tell himself is a fine patriot-peasant. I want your criticism on it. You did well to cry so heartily over *Wallenstein:* I like it best of any in the series. Is it not strange that they cannot for their hearts get up a decent play in our own country? All try it, and all fail. Lord John Russell has sent us down what he calls a "tragedy" the other day —and upon a subject no less dangerous than the fate of Don Carlos. Schiller and Alfieri yet live. The Newspapers say Lord Byron is greatly obliged to his brother lord, the latter having even surpassed *Werner* in tameness and insipidity; so that Byron is no longer Author of the dullest tragedy ever printed by a lord. This is very foul to Byron; for though

I fear he will never write a good play, it is impossible he can ever write anything so truly innocent as this *Don Carlos.* I would have sent it to you; but it seemed superfluous. There is great regularity in the speeches, the lines have all ten syllables exactly—and precisely the same smooth ding-dong rhythm from the first page to the last; there are also little bits of metaphors scattered up and down at convenient intervals, and very fair whig sentiments here and there; but the whole is cold, flat, stale, and unprofitable, to a degree that "neither gods nor men nor columns can endure." You and I could write a better thing in two weeks, and then burn it. Yet he dedicates to Lord Holland, and seems to say like Correggio in the Vatican, *ed io anche son pittore.* Let us be of courage! we shall not be hindmost any way.

I am really sorry to see you in such a coil about your writing. What use is there in so perplexing and overtasking yourself with what should be the ornament and solace of your life, not its chief vexation? I take blame to myself

in the business; and pray you to be moderate. One thing ought to afford you some consolation: "Genius," said Sir Joshua Reynolds, and he never spoke more truly, "is nothing but the intense direction of a mind to some intellectual object—that consecration of all our powers to it, which leads to disregard all toils and obstacles in the attainment of it, and if strong enough will ultimately bring success."[1] Some such thought as this was Sir Joshua's; and truly it contains nine-tenths of the whole doctrine: it should lead every one that feels this inspiration and unrest within to be proud of feeling it, and also to adopt the only means of turning it to good account—the sedulous cultivation of the faculties—by patiently amassing knowledge and studying by every method to digest it well. This, my dear pupil, is the great deficiency

[1] The words of Sir Joshua which were in Carlyle's mind were probably the following from his *Second Discourse:* "Nothing is denied to well-directed labour: nothing is to be obtained without it. Not to enter into metaphysical discussions on the nature or essence of genius, I will venture to assert, that assiduity unabated by difficulty, and a disposition eagerly directed to the object of its pursuit, will produce effects similar to those which some call the result of *natural powers*."

with you at present; this I would have you to regard as your chief object for a considerable time to come. Be diligent with your historical and other studies; and consider that every new step you make in this direction *is* infallibly, however circuitously, leading you nearer to the goal at which you are aiming. For composition, the art of expressing the thoughts and emotions you are thus daily acquiring, do not by any means neglect it; but at the same time feel no surprise at the disproportion of your wishes to your execution in regard to it. How long did it take you to learn playing on the Piano? and what execrable jingling did you make when you first tried it? But what are all the stringed instruments of the Earth in point of complicacy compared to one immortal mind? Is it strange that you should feel a difficulty in managing the rich melodies that "slumber in the chords" of your Imagination, your Understanding, and your Heart? Long years of patient industry, many trials, many failures must be gone through, before you can even begin to satisfy yourself. And do not let this dishearten you—for if

rightly gone about, the task is pleasant as well as necessary. I have promised that if you will but take hold of my hand, I—dim-sighted guide as I am—will lead you along pleasant paths up even to the summit. I am still confident in my predictions, still zealous to perform: my only stipulation is that we go on constantly and regularly; you shall neither stop to trifle by the way, nor run till you are out of breath—as you are now doing, and must soon cease to do in disgust and exhaustion—or else break your heart in vain striving.

I partly guess what hinders you from beginning your "story:" it is the excess of that noble quality in you, which I have preached against so vigorously, and still love for all my preaching—the excess of your *Ambition*, the too high ideas you have formed of excellence, and your vexation at not realising them. It is safe to err on this side so far as feeling is concerned; but wrong to let your action be so much cramped by these considerations. Cannot you do as others do? Sit down and write—something short—but write and write, though you

could swear it was the most stupid stuff in nature, till you fairly get to the end. A week after it is finished it will look far better than you expected. The next you write will go on more smoothly and look better still. So likewise with the third and fourth,—in regular progression,—till you will wonder how such difficulties could ever stop you for a moment. Be not too careful for a subject; take the one you feel most interest in and understand best—some description of manners or passions—some picture of a kind of life you are familiar with, and which looks lovely in your eyes: and for a commencement, why should it give you pause? Take the precept of Horace,—*proripe in medias res;* rush forward and fear nothing. You really magnify the matter too much: never think of the press or public when you are writing: remember that it is only a *secondary matter* at present, to be taken up as a light task, and laid down again whenever it interferes with your regular studies. If you cannot think of any proper theme, cannot get in motion for whatever cause; then let the business rest for a

week; cease to vex yourself about it, in time materials will come unsought. Finally, my dear Friend, possess your mind in patience, follow your laborious but noble task with peaceful diligence; study, read, accumulate ideas, and try to give them utterance in all ways; and look upon it as a cardinal truth that there is *no* obstacle before you which calm perseverance will not enable you to surmount.

Now, I am sure, you cannot say I have tried to flatter you on this occasion. My speech has been at once dull and honest; I have preached till we are both grown stupid, you observe; and I leave you undeceived at any rate if uninstructed. The sum of my doctrine is: Begin to write something, if you can, without delay, never minding *how* shallow and poor it may seem; if you cannot, drive it altogether out of your thoughts, till we meet. I entertain no fear whatever of the result: I know well you *will* write better than you yet dream of, and look back on these sage prescriptions of mine with an indulgent pity. Shall we not also write together when times are better? Yes we shall

—in spite of your good-natured sarcasms at my "wit and genius," and the lubberly productions I send you at present—we *shall* write in concert—if Fortune does not mean to vex me more than she has ever done. This Hope is a fine creature after all! I owe her more than the whole posse of saints and angels put together.

By the Belfast Town and Country Almanack, Spring will be here in a month. Perhaps you think to steal away again without seeing me: but try it—! To be sure, it is only the brief space of a year, since we met, for about five minutes; and we have so many hundred centuries to live on Earth together—I confess I am very unreasonable.

But why should I keep prating? The night is run, my pen is worn to the stump; and certain male and female Milliners in this street are regaling themselves with *Auld Langsyne*, and punch and other viler liquors, and calling back my thoughts too fast from those elysian flights to the vulgar prose of this poor world. May Heaven be the comforter of these poor Milliners! Their noise and jollity might call

forth anathemas from a cynic: my prayer for them is that they may never want a sausage or two and a goose better or worse and a drop of "blue ruin" to keep their Christmas with; and whatever quantities of tape and beeswax and diluted tea their several necessities require.

I will write again with Faust—briefly, I promise—and tell you all that I am doing and mean to do. Good-night! my dear Friend.—I am always yours in sincerity,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

CXIII.—To his MOTHER, Mainhill.

3 MORAY STREET, *4th January* 1823.

MY DEAR MOTHER—I see there is a long letter lying for you already, and seasoned by a fortnight's keeping; yet I have begun another sheet which I have spread out before me, and am determined to fill before quitting. I do not think ever people had so voluminous a correspondent: it matters not whether you write or keep silence, you are loaded with epistles every

fortnight, enough to break the back of *Robby* himself, if he were not rather lightly freighted in this dull season. How you will get them all read I know not—or care not, for that is your concern, mine is only to write as long as the pen will move.

I hear no particular tidings of my Mother; only I am inclined to include her under the general head of "all going on as usual," and to hope that her health and spirits do not altogether fail her, but continue to afford strength to discharge her many duties and make head against her many difficulties. I hope to live beside you yet a long time, though we see one another too rarely of late. You must know I am to have a pleasant dwelling-place in the course of years; and there you and I shall reserve a place for colleaguing together, and what talking and smoking and gossiping and tea-*shines* we shall have! All this is coming yet. In the meantime, I am going on quite well in all respects—except for some noises which have disturbed me at nights a little, concerning which Alick will instruct you, and from

which we are now sure one way or another soon to be completely delivered.

It is a pitiful thing to be so touchy; but one good effect of it is that it may teach one the utility of Patience. There is no other remedy in fact but this universal one; if you would tear the very liver out of yourself, you cannot mend the matter, you must *just submit*. However, I am getting stronger and stronger every month: I now reckon myself in quite a tolerable state; and you may be sure I shall neglect no precaution for improving and confirming these favourable symptoms. Heaven be praised that I am so well! If you would offer me health in the one hand and the sceptre of Europe in the other—I should hesitate few moments which to choose.

Poor Jenny Crone is gone at last! She was a good woman; seemed to keep "the noiseless tenor of her way" through the wilderness of life in peace and blamelessness; that now is more for her than if she had been Empress of all the Earth. Well was it said, "Let me die the death of the Righteous and let my last end be like his!" It is a wish which all of us should

be busied in seeking the means to get accomplished. Strange that the shallow pageant of this transitory being should have power so far to draw us from the "vast concerns of an Eternal scene"!

I know not what books you have to read, or which of them you are most in favour with at present. Cannot you tell me some which I can get you? Or if not, cannot you point out some other thing which I can do for you? "Dear! Bairn, I want for nothing," I hear you reply. Now I know you do want for many things, and I am often really vexed that you do not mention them. Will you never understand that you cannot gratify me so much, by any plan you can take, as by enabling me to promote your comfort in any way within my power? Speak, then! Speak, I tell you! . . .

Jack is busy writing to my Father, or he would have sent you a line. He is doing well here, enjoys good health, and follows out his studies without flinching. His old propensity to logic or the "use of reason" he still retains in considerable preservation. Often in our argu-

ments I am tempted to employ my Father's finisher "*thou Natural, thou*"—but poor Jack looks out with his broad face so honestly and good-naturedly that I have not the heart. He is a very good soul, and comforts me greatly when I am out of sorts.

Now surely, my good Mother, you must confess yourself to be a letter in my debt: you ought to pay it with the earliest time you have. I do wish you would learn to write, and send me letters by the quire. It only wants a beginning. My best love to all the *childer*. I am ever your affectionate son, TH. CARLYLE.

CXIV.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

3 MORAY STREET, *12th January* 1823.

. . . What a wicked creature you are to make me laugh so at poor Irving! Do I not know him for one of the best men breathing, and that he loves us both as if he were our brother? Yet it must be owned there is something quite unique in his style of thought and language. Conceive the chords of sensibility awakened by

the sound of *Caller herring!* It is little better than the pathos of a great fat greasy Butcher whimpering and blubbering over the calf he has just run his knife into. The truth is, our friend has a radically dull organ of taste; he does everything in a floundering awkward ostentatious way. I have advised him a thousand times to give up all attempts at superfineness and be a son of Anak honestly at once, in mind as in body: but he will not see it thus. Occasionally, I confess, I have envied him this want of tact, or rather the contented dimness of perception from which it partly proceeds: it contributes largely to the affectionateness and placidity of his general character; he loves everything, because he sees nothing in its severe reality; hence his enthusiastic devotion, his fervour on topics adapted to the general comprehension, his eloquence, and the favour he gives to all and so gets from all. I still hope he will improve considerably, but not that he will ever entirely get free of these absurdities. And what if he should not? He has merit to balance ten times as many, and make him still

one of the worthiest persons we shall ever meet with. Let us like him the better, the more freely we laugh. . . .

CXV.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

3 MORAY STREET, *Monday* [*January* 1823].

. . . Four months ago I had a splendid plan of treating the history of England during the Commonwealth in a new style—not by way of regular narrative—for which I felt too well my inequality, but by grouping together the most singular manifestations of mind that occurred then under distinct heads—selecting some remarkable person as the representative of each class, and trying to explain and illustrate their excellences and defects, all that was curious in their fortune as individuals, or in their formation as members of the human family, by the most striking methods I could devise. Already my characters were fixed upon—Laud, Fox, Clarendon, Cromwell, Milton, Hampden; already I was busied in the study of their

works; when that wretched Philomath, with his sines and tangents came to put me in mind of a prior engagement,—to obstruct my efforts in this undertaking, and at length to drive them totally away. Next I thought of some work of imagination: I would paint, in a brief but vivid manner, the old story of a noble mind struggling against an ignoble fate; some fiery yet benignant spirit reaching forth to catch the bright creations of his own fancy, and breaking his head against the vulgar obstacles of this lower world. But then what knew I of this lower world? The man must be a hero, and I could only draw the materials of him from myself. Rich source of such materials! Besides, it were well that he died of love; and your novel-love is become a perfect drug; and of the genuine sort I could not undertake to say a word. I once thought of calling in your assistance, that we might work in concert, and make a new hero and heroine such as the world never saw. Could I have obtained your concurrence? Would to Heaven we could make such a thing! Finally I abandoned the pro-

ject.—I have since tried to resume the Commonwealth; but the charm of it is gone: I contemplate with terror the long train of preparation, and the poorness of the result. . . .

CXVI.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

3 MORAY STREET, *20th January* 1823.

. . . I wish I had not sent you this great blubbering numbskull D'Israeli: his "Calamities" have sunk upon your spirits, and tinged the whole world of intellect with the hue of mourning and despair. The paths of learning seem, in your present mood of mind, to lead but through regions of woe and lamentation and darkness and dead men's bones. Hang the ass!—it is all false, if you take it up in this light. Do you not see that his observations can apply only to men in whom genius was more the want of common qualities than the possession of uncommon ones; whose life was embittered not so much because they had imagination and sensibility, as because they had not prudence and true moral principles? If one chose to investigate

the history of the first twenty tattered blackguards to be found lying on the benches of the watch-house, or stewing in drunkenness and squalor in the Jerusalem Tap-room, it would not be difficult to write a much more moving book on the "calamities of shoemakers" or street-porters, or any other class of handicraftsmen, than this of D'Israeli's on Authors. It is the few ill-starred wretches, and the multitude of ill-behaved, that are miserable, in all ranks,—and among writers just as elsewhere. Literature, I do believe, has keener pains connected with it than almost any other pursuit; but then it has also far livelier and nobler pleasures, and if you shudder at engaging in it on those terms, you ought also to envy the stupidity of other people, their insensibility, the meanness of their circumstances, whatever narrows their sphere of action, and adds more stagnation to the current of their feelings. The dangers with which intellectual enterprises are encompassed should awake us to vigilance, to unwearied circumspection, to gain the absolute dominion of ourselves: they should not dishearten but instruct. You

say rightly that you would not quit this way of life although you could: no one that has once tasted the nectar of science or literature, that will not thirst for it thenceforth to the end. Nor shall my own scholar repent this her noble determination. Dangers beset her, neither few nor small; but her steadfastness and prudence will conquer them; she will yet be happy and famous beyond her hopes.

"Oh! if this were true!" you exclaim, "but—" Nay, I will have no buts: it depends entirely upon yourself. I have no more hesitation in affirming that Nature has given you qualities enough to satisfy any reasonable ambition—to secure you the much longed-for elevation you pant after—than I have to believe my own existence. It is no doubt in your own power to frustrate all these hopes, to ruin the fairest promises it has been my chance to witness in any one, and to make your life as wretched as it will be useless. But I trust in God you will be better guided; you will learn in time to moderate your ardour, to cultivate the virtues of patience and self-command, to believe that

the sole though certain road to excellence is through long tracts of calm exertion and quiet study. Do think of this, my dear Jane, both for my sake and your own. Why will you vex and torment yourself so, for a precocious fruit, which Time itself would bring to a much happier and more glorious maturity? You must absolutely acquire far more knowledge before your faculties can have anything like fair play: in your actual condition, I confess they often amaze me. When I was of your age, I had not half the skill. And what haste is there? Rousseau was above thirty before he suspected himself to be anything but a thievish apprentice, and a vagabond littleworth: Cowper became a poet at fifty, and found he was still in time enough. Will you also let me say that I continue to lament this inordinate *love of Fame* which agitates you so; and which, as I believe, lies at the root of all this mischief? I think this feeling unworthy of you: it is far too shallow a principle for a mind like yours. Do not imagine that I make no account of a glorious name: I think it the best of *external* rewards,

but never to be set in competition with those that lie *within.* To depend for our highest happiness on the popular breath, to lie at the mercy of every scribbler for our daily meed of enjoyment—does seem to me a very helpless state. It is the means of fame not the end that chiefly delights me; if I believed that I had done the very uttermost that I could for myself, had cultivated my soul to the very highest pitch that Nature meant it to reach, I think I could be happy though no suffrages at all were given me; my conscience would be at rest, I should actually *be* a worthy man, whatever I might *seem.* You may also take it as an indubitable truth that there is nothing lasting or satisfying in these applauses of others: the only gratification, worth calling by that name, arises from the approval of the *man within.* I may also state my firm conviction, that no man ever became *famous;* entirely or even chiefly from the *love of fame.* It is the interior fire, the solitary delight which our own hearts experience in these things, and the misery we feel in vacancy, that must urge us, or we shall never

reach the goal. The love of Fame will make a Percival Stockdale,[1] but not a Milton or a Schiller. Do you believe in this doctrine? Then study to keep down this strong desire of notoriety; give scope rather to your feeling of the Beautiful and the Great within yourself, conceive that every new idea you get does actually exalt you as a thinking being, every new branch of knowledge you master does in very truth make you richer and more enviable though there were no other being but yourself in the Universe to judge you. There is an independence, a grandeur of solitary power, and strong self-help in this, which attracts one greatly. It makes us the arbiters of our own destiny: it is the surest method of getting glory, and the best means of setting us above the want of it. I do beg of you with all my heart to consider these things well; my own

[1] A forgotten writer, "voluminous, egotistical, and shallow," commemorated in D'Israeli's *Calamities of Authors*. He published his *Memoirs* in 1809; "I know," he declares, "that this book will live and escape the havoc that has been made of my literary fame." There are notices of him in Croker's *Boswell*, chaps. xxiii., xxv., lxxx.

opinion seems to me true as the truest sentence in the Gospel; and if you could adopt it, how much happier would it make you!

I am sorry for you with your Highland Cousin and the gallant Captain Spalding. But it is wrong in you to take these things so much to heart. A little interruption does no harm at all, and these visits, as they bring you more in contact with the common world, are in your case absolutely beneficial. Therefore do not cloud your countenance when Spalding enters; do not [flash] those bright eyes of yours with indignation when he lingers. Study rather to make the man happy, and to be happy with him: throw by your books and papers, and be again a lively, thoughtless, racketing girl as you were before. There is much improvement to be got in such things; they give an exercise to the mind as difficult and valuable as any literary study can. Be happy, I tell you; diligent in moderation when the time bids, and idle and gay as willingly. For your Mother, I do entreat you to continue to love her and honour her and prefer her company to that of any

other. The exercise of these placid affections is the truest happiness to be got in this world, and the best nourishment for all that is worthiest in our nature. I dare not promise that you will ever find so true a friend as your Mother. Some love us for our qualities—for what we are or what we do: but a Mother's bosom is ever the home of her *child* independent of all concomitants; ever warm to welcome us in good and bad report, a kindly hiding-place which neither misfortune nor misconduct, woe, want, or infamy or guilt itself, can shut against us.

. . . . . .

You cannot speak too much to me of your difficulties in any point. God knows there are few sacrifices I would not make to help you. For your writing, I do not wonder in the least that it agitates and embarrasses you. There never was a human being in your state that did not a thousand times look on himself just as you do, as the stupidest creature in the whole Universe. Nor was there ever a human being more mistaken than you are, this time; or

more sure of seeing his mistake.—But hark! Two o'clock is striking and still here! . . .

CXVII.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

3 MORAY STREET, *Wednesday night*
[*February* 1823].

. . . You are right to keep by Gibbon, since you have begun it: there is no other tolerable history of those times and nations within the reach of such readers as we are; it is a kind of bridge that connects the antique with the modern ages. And how gorgeously does it swing across the gloomy and tumultuous chasm of those barbarous centuries: Gibbon is a man whom one never forgets—unless oneself deserving to be forgotten; the perusal of his work forms an epoch in the history of one's mind. I know you will admire Gibbon, yet I do not expect or wish that you should love him. He has but a coarse and vulgar heart, with all his keen logic, and glowing imagination, and lordly irony: he worships power and splendour; and suffering virtue, the most heroic devoted-

ness if unsuccessful, unarrayed in the pomp and circumstance of outward glory, has little of his sympathy. To the Christians he is frequently very unfair: if he had lived now, he would have written differently on these points. I would not have you love him; I am sure you will not. Have you any notion what an *ugly* thief he was? Jack brought down his *Life* to-day, and it has a profile of his whole person—alas for Mlle. Curchod! Alas for her daughter, Wilhelmina Necker, who wished to marry him when she was thirteen—not out of love to him but to her Mother! I would have sent you this *Life*, but it is a large quarto—and I knew not if you would receive it patiently. Should you wish it, write to me to-morrow and I will send it out. There is some amusement in it, but you will relish it more when you know more fully and think more highly of the studied labours of the mind which it shows you in deshabille.

. . . . . .

Now have I not tired you enough for once? There is poor Schiller lying too, at whom I

must have a hit or two before I sleep. It will be an invaluable life this of Schiller's, were it once completed: so splendid and profound and full of *unction*—Oh! I could beat my brains out when I think what a miserable, pithless ninny I am! Would it were in my power either to write like a man or honestly to give up the attempt for ever. Chained to the earth by native gravitation and a thousand wretched fetters, I am miserable unless I be soaring in the empyrean; and thus between the lofty will and the powerless deed, I have no peace, no peace. Sometimes I could almost run distracted; my wearied soul seems as if it were hunted round within its narrow enclosure by a whole legion of the dogs of Tartarus, which sleep not, night or day. In fact I am never happy except when *full* of business, and *nothing more*. The secret of all is, "I have no genius," and like Andrew Irving's horse, I *have* "a *dibbil* of a temper." We must just submit!

Boyd the pursy Bookseller wishes me to translate Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, which I have told him is very clever. It will not be

determined for some weeks—not till I see where I am to be and how, during summer. . . .

CXVIII.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

EDINBURGH, *4th March* 1823.

. . . I am really vexed that you are not going forward with any composition: the art of giving out ideas is about as essential and certainly more laborious than that of gathering them in. We must really make an effort to remedy this deficiency, and that as early as possible. In the meantime do not disturb yourself about it; go on with your Gibbon and your other studies calmly and diligently, and assure yourself that if not in the best of all modes, your employment is in the next to the best. I do trust you will not grow idle or irregular again; there is nothing satisfactory to be accomplished by you if you do; everything if you avoid doing it. You must make another effort upon *Götz*: it is hardest at the first. This Goethe has as much in him as any ten of them: he is not a mere bacchanalian rhymester, cursing and

foaming and laying about him as if he had breathed a gallon of nitrous oxide, or pouring forth his most inane philosophy and most maudlin sorrow in strains that "split the ears of the groundlings;" but a man of true culture and universal genius, not less distinguished for the extent of his knowledge and the profoundness of his ideas and the variety of his feelings, than for the vivid and graceful energy, the inventive and deeply meditative sagacity, the skill to temper enthusiasm with judgment, which he shows in exhibiting them. Wordsworth and Byron! They are as the Christian Ensign and Captain Bobadil before the Duke of Marlborough. You must go on with *Götz*: it will serve you to read while *here*, if it do no better. I wish it would. . . .

CXIX.—To his MOTHER, Mainhill.

3 MORAY STREET, *22d March* 1823.

MY DEAR MOTHER—It appears that Farries is here to-day, and as I am got down from India Street in time for writing you a few words, I

cannot omit this opportunity of doing so. We have not got a syllable of intelligence from Mainhill; but this we impute solely to Geordie's having set out without giving you proper warning, and we force ourselves to believe that you are all in your usual health and circumstances,—a blessing which it has pleased Providence long to continue with us, and which we shall never prize sufficiently till it is taken away. For you, my dear Mother, we are seldom without anxieties; your infirm state and many cares but too well justify them. I can only entreat you again more earnestly than ever to take every possible care of yourself—to watch over your health as the greatest treasure to all your children, and to none more than me. I still hope to find you whole and well when we meet, and to have our tea and smoke and small talk together *down the house*, many, many happy times, as heretofore. There are no moments when I can forget all my cares, as in these. I seem to lose twenty of my years, when we are chatting together, and to be a happy, thoughtless urchin of a boy once more. Amid all my

sorrows (of which I often think I have had my share first and last), there is nothing which has yielded me so constant a gratification as your affection and welfare, nothing that I ought to [be] so thankful for enjoying,—or that I should pray more earnestly for having still vouchsafed to me.

There is nothing in this sort of prating I am going on with; but [it] is about as good as anything I have got to tell you. When I have said that Jack and I are still in our common state of health and going forward with our customary occupations, I have as good as finished my tale. There is no change in our individual conditions, and the changes which pass in the world around us are things in which we have little part or lot, and so take little note of. Life to both of us is still very much *in prospect:* we are not yet what we hope to be. Jack is going to become a large gawsie,[1] broad-faced Practiser of Physic—to ride his horse in time, and give aloes by rule, and make money, and be a large man; while I—in spite of all my

[1] Jolly.

dyspepsias and nervousness and hypochondrias —am still bent on being a very meritorious sort of character — rather noted in the world of letters, if it so please Providence—and useful, I hope, whithersoever I go, in *the good old cause*, for which I beg you to believe that I cordially agree with you in feeling my chief interest, however we may differ in our modes of expressing it. For attaining this mighty object, I have need of many things—which I fear I shall never get; but if my health were once sound again, I should feel such an inextinguishable diligence within me that my own exertions might supply almost every want. This greatest of blessings is yet but partially restored to me: however, I do verily believe that it is coming back by degrees,—so I live as patiently as I can and fear nothing.

The next summer I hope will do great things for me—almost set me on my feet again. . . .

But I am at the bottom of my sheet, and must conclude this palaver. There are many debts lying against me to my worthy correspondents at Mainhill—which lie heavy on my

conscience and must in due time be discharged. I beg you will try to keep the creatures quiet in the meanwhile, and advise them to send me another file of epistles. Is Jane going on to rhyme? I showed her "meanest of the letter kind" to several judges, and they declared she must be a very singular *crow*.[1]—This is a real truth.

You must give my love to my Father and all the rest *conjunctly and severally*. Tell Sandy and my Father to write next time, if they can snatch as many moments from the sowing. Write to me yourself the very first spare hour you have. Good-night, my dear Mother—it is dark, and I must cease.—I am ever yours,

T. CARLYLE.

CXX.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

EDINBURGH, *6th April* 1823.

. . . As to your literary hopes, entertain them confidently! There is to me no better

[1] His little sister "Craw Jean," so nicknamed because of her black hair.

symptom of what is in you than your despair of getting it expressed. Cannot write! My dear Pupil, you have no idea of what a task it is to every one, when it is taken up in that solemn way. Did you never hear of Rousseau lying in his bed and painfully wrenching every syllable of his *Nouvelle Heloise* from the obscure complexities of his imagination. He composed every sentence of it, on an average, *five times over;* and often when he took up the pen, the whole concern was vanished quite away! John James is my only comfort when I sit down to write. I could frequently swear that I am the greatest dunce in creation: the cooking of a paragraph is little better than the labour of the Goldmaker; I sweat and toil and keep tedious vigil, and at last there runs out from the tortured melting-pot an ingot—of solid pewter. There is no help but patient diligence, and *that will conquer everything.* Never waver, my own Jane! I shall yet "stand a-tiptoe" at your name. Not write! I declare if I had known nothing of you but your letters, I should have pronounced you to be already an excellent

writer. Depend upon it, this is nothing but your taste outgrowing your practice. Had you been a peer's daughter, and lived among literary men, and seen things to exercise your powers of observation, the world would ere this have been admiring the sagacious humour of your remarks and the graceful vigour of your descriptions. As it is, you have only to begin and to go on: time will make all possible, all easy. Why did you give up that Essay on Friendship? *For my sake,* resume it and finish it! Never mind how bad, how execrable it may seem, go through with it. The next will be better, and the next, and the next; you will approach at each trial nearer the Perfection which no one ever reached. If I knew you fairly on the way, I should feel quite easy: your reading is going on as it ought; there wants only that you should write also. Begin this Essay again, if you love me!

Goethe lies waiting for your arrival. You make a right distinction about Goethe: he is a great genius and *does not make you cry.* His feelings are various as the hues of Earth and

Sky, but his intellect is the Sun which illuminates and overrules them all. He does not yield himself to his emotions, but uses them rather as things for his judgment to scrutinise and apply to purpose. I think Goethe the only living model of a great writer. The Germans say there have been *three* geniuses in the world since it began—Homer, Shakespeare, and Goethe! This of course is shooting on the wing: but after all abatements, their countryman is a glorious fellow. It is one of my finest day-dreams to see him ere I die.

As you are fond of tears, I have sent you a fresh supply of Schiller. His *Kabale und Liebe* will make you cry your fill. That Ferdinand with his *Du Louise und ich und die Liebe* is a fine youth; I liked him well—though his age is some five years less than mine. You will also read Schiller's life: it is written by a sensible and well-informed but very dull man. I forget his name—but Schiller once lived in his house—near Leipzig, I think.

That miserable farrago of mine on the same subject goes on as ill as anything can go. I

have been thrice on the point of burning it, and giving up the task in despair. Interruption upon interruption, so that I have scarcely an hour in the day at my disposal; and dulness thickening round me till all is black as Egypt when the darkness might be felt! There is nothing for it but the old song Patience! Patience! I *will* finish it. By the way, I wish you would think of the most striking passages you can recollect of in *Karlos*, *Wallenstein*, *Tell*, etc.: I design to give extracts and translations. Have them at your finger ends when you *come*.

CXXI.—From his MOTHER.

MAINHILL, 13*th April* 1823.

DEAR SON—I take the pen in my hand, however roughly I may handle it, for I am greatly in debt in this respect, but cannot pay off as I would; you will, I hope, take the will for the deed. I hope and look forward when we shall meet, if it please Providence, then I will thank you for all your kind letters and presents. I like to hear of your going to the

bathing, I hope it will do you good if you do not go too deep. Will you be home, think you, before you go? Sandy has a sprightly little horse,—come home and get him, I think it would fit nicely. Tell me truly, are you stout, and is the book begun yet? I suppose you have little time for it at present. Dear me! what's Jack about? tell him to write me all his news, good or bad. I fear if you go to the country we will not get so many of your good epistles; they do me a great deal of good in comforting me in my old age; it is like reaping my harvest. May you be long in health and prosperity, a blessing to me and the rest of your friends. I believe if we would weigh our mercies with our crosses it would help to content us in our wilderness journey, for a wilderness this world is, though it is full of mercies from our kind Father.

We have fine weather, and are very throng[1] managing and getting in our crop. I need not tell you of the stormy winter; you would feel it; notwithstanding we are all alive and well,

[1] Busy.

thank God! We have been rather uncommonly quiet this winter, and in general happy. We had no Servant but Jamie Aitken, till now we have got a man. Have you heard anything about Johnstone and Irving, how are they coming on? tell us. Tell Jack we advise him to come home; I think it will be better for his health; he can learn well enough here and get the country air, and we will be glad to see him to spend the Summer with us. But it is growing dark, and I rather fear you scarce can read this scrawl.

So I add no more, but still remain your affectionate Mother,

MARGRET CARLYLE.

O could I but write!

CXXII.—To JOHN A. CARLYLE, Mainhill.

3 MORAY STREET, *9th May* 1823.

MY DEAR JACK—I had given up hopes of your letter for Wednesday night, when the Postman knocked his heavy knock, and sent me the wished-for tidings, a little after dusk.

I was heartily glad to learn that you had reached home so snugly, and found all our kind friends there in such a case. Long, long may they be so! We poor fellows have much to strive with; but there is always some sweetness mingled in our cup, while we have parents and brethren to befriend us and give us welcome with true right hands.

In pursuance of your order, as well as to gratify my individual inclinations, I have selected one of those long sheets, and placed myself down at the desk to tell you my news, or rather having so few to tell, to scribble for an hour to you, as if you were still sitting by me at tea in the gloaming, and I only obliged to talk with the pen instead of that more unruly member, which in sulky nights used to utter so many hard sayings. I am better humoured this evening; and besides, Jack, we are sundered now by moors and mountains many a weary league, so that chatting together is a more moving business than it lately was. We shall write *very* often during summer, and to some purpose I doubt not.

Having found such a reception at home, I have no doubt that you will feel reasonably happy during summer, will make no small progress in various useful studies, and what is still better, completely recover your goodly corporeal fabric, which under the sinister influences of this miserable place had certainly begun to suffer somewhat. The only thing, as you well know, which can make and keep a rational creature happy is abundant employment; and this I feel certain, your sedulous and rather anxious disposition will not let you want. By the time I reach Mainhill, you will read me a leash of German, give me your opinion of Buffon, talk confidently about Anatomy and Chemistry, and know all *the doses* as well as Lavement himself did.

This is what may well be called "reading Gregory's *Conspectus:*" there is, you mind, another branch of study, that of "English Composition;" and for this also I have cared. Listen to me. Boyd and I have talked repeatedly about the French Novels *Elisabeth* and *Paul et Virginie:* we have at length come to

a bargain. I have engaged that you, "the Universal Pan," shall translate them both in your best style (I overlooking the manuscript, and correcting the Press), and receive for so doing the sum of £20: the whole to be ready about August next. You will get the French copies and the existing translations, by Farries; and then, I read you, betake yourself to the duty with might and main. I have no doubt you will do it in a sufficient manner. You have only to consult the old copy at any dubious point, and never to be squeamish in imitating it. All that Boyd wants is a reasonable translation, which no one can prosecute him for printing. Those already before the public are very good, I understand, particularly that of *Elisabeth* by Bowles, and I need not advise you to read it over carefully before commencing, and study as much as may be not to fall below it. I was happy in getting this task for you, on various accounts. In the first place, it is a very favourable method of training yourself in the art of composition; secondly, it will serve to put some "money in your purse;"

and thirdly, it will vastly increase your comfort and *respectability* at Mainhill during Summer. This last is what I chiefly look to: a young man of any spirit is apt to vex himself with many groundless imaginations while in such circumstances as yours, to think he is useless and burdensome and what not; for all which, there is no remedy equal to giving him some work *to keep his hand in use*, and tie the limbs of Fancy, while those of real industry are kept in motion. In this respect I trust the task will not be without its use to you. For the rest, never trouble your heart about the difficulties of it. I saw by your operations last year on *Legendre*, and I judge by the improvement you have since made, that you are quite equal to such a thing: and at the very worst, I can brush away all the impurities of your work with my critical besom in less than no time. So be content, my good Jack, with this "day of small things," go through it calmly and diligently, looking on it as the earnest of better and more weighty enterprises that are to follow. I expect that

you and I are yet to write mighty tomes in concert.

There never was such a *blethering bitch* as I. There is the end of my sheet, and not one word said about my news or anything I meant to write about. Tell my ever-kind and dear Mother, that I am in very truth all but quite healthy. There is next to no disease about me, only vexed nerves, which the multiplied irritations of this city vex still further. I have not tasted drugs since you left me. With quiet usage in the country for six months, I feel confident, I should be completely well. And thither we are going soon! The Buller family set out on Thursday first, and I follow them at my leisure a few days after. Since you went off I have been unusually well. The first day or so I was rather surly; but I took to reading vehemently, and the evil spirit left me. I am now quite contented, as I used to be last year. At any rate I have no time to be otherwise: there is such regulating and arranging as you never knew, I am kept busy from morn to night. *Wilhelm Meister* I have almost en-

gaged to translate: Schiller also is to go on: what scribbling I shall have! I have grown better ever since we parted—to-day and yesterday I bathed: it was very fine.

But I must close this despicable rag of a letter, and engage to send you another before I leave Town. How I long to see all the world at Mainhill! Give my heartfelt love to every one of them young and old. I expect to hear from Alick by Farries, and constantly throughout the season: his late silence I excuse for the sake of his seed-time labours, and well I may. Tell my Mother she must take tea every night. I do not think I shall want any socks; but she shall hear in time if I do. Tell my Father that it is *his* time to write, he is in my debt and cannot pay me a minute *o'er soon.* Remember me kindly to Graham: give my services to the poetess and all our beloved sisters and brothers *nominatim.* Excuse this miserable scrawl: I am hurried to death, but always yours,

TH. CARLYLE.

Get blacker ink next time, and be a *canny*

bairn. Tell Sandy to write and *not* to send the pony till he hear.

CXXIII.—To Rev. THOMAS MURRAY, Edinburgh.

KINNAIRD HOUSE,[1] *17th June* 1823.

MY DEAR MURRAY—In due time I was favoured with your letter, the first I had received since my arrival; the first tangible proof, that in removing from the country of all my friends, I had not also removed from their recollections. Finding the commissions you had

[1] In a bit of unprinted reminiscences Carlyle thus describes Kinnaird House and his life there:—"In Perthshire, about a mile below the junction of Tay and Tummel, not far below the mouth of Killiecrankie Pass. . . . I lodged and slept in the *old* mansion, a queer, old-fashioned, snug enough, entirely secluded edifice, sunk among trees, about a gunshot from the new big House; hither I came to smoke about twice or thrice in the daytime; had a good oak-wood fire at night, and sat in a seclusion, in a silence not to be surpassed above ground. I was writing *Schiller*, translating *Meister;* my health, in spite of my diligent riding, grew worse and worse; thoughts all wrapt in gloom, in weak dispiritment and discontent, wandering mournfully to my loved ones far away; *letters* to and from, it may well be supposed, were my most genial solacement. At times, too, there was something of noble in my sorrow, in the great solitude among the rocking winds; but not often."

undertaken all discharged with your accustomed kindness and fidelity, I had nothing further to do but abandon myself to the cheerful feelings with which your articles of news and speculation and other curious and pleasant matter naturally enough inspired me. Your letters have a charm to me independently of their intrinsic merit; they are letters of my first and oldest correspondent; they carry back the mind to old days—days in themselves perhaps not greatly better than those now passing over us—but invested by the kind treachery of Imagination with hues which nothing present can equal. If I have any fault to find with you, it is in the very excess of what renders any correspondence agreeable; the excess of your complaisance, the too liberal oblations which you offer at the shrine of other people's vanity. I might object to this with more asperity, did I not consider that flattery is in truth the sovereign emollient, the true oil of life, by which the joints of the great social machine, often stiff and rusty enough, are kept from grating and made to play sweetly to and fro; hence that if you pour

it on a thought too lavishly, it is an error on the safe side, an error which proceeds from the native warmness of your heart, and ought not to be quarrelled with too sharply, not at least by one who profits though unduly by the commission of it. So I will submit to be treated as a kind of slender genius, since my friend will have it so: our intercourse will fare but little worse on that account. We have now, as you say, known each other long, and never, I trust, seen aught to make us feel ashamed of that relation: I calculate that succeeding years will but more firmly establish our connection, strengthening with the force of habit and the memory of new kind offices what has a right to subsist without these aids. Some time hence, when you are seated in your peaceful manse, you at one side of the parlour fire, Mrs. M. at the other, and two or three little M.'s, fine chubby urchins, hopping about the carpet, you will suddenly observe the door fly open, and a tall meagre care-worn figure stalk forward, his grim countenance lightened by unusual smiles, in the certainty of meeting with a cordial

welcome. This knight of the rueful visage will in fact mingle with the group for a season; and be merry as the merriest, though his looks are sinister. I warn you to make provision for such emergencies. In process of time, I too must have my own peculiar hearth; wayward as my destiny has hitherto been, perplexed and solitary as my path of life still is, I never cease to reckon on yet paying scot and lot on my own footing. Like the men of Glasgow I shall have "a house *within myself*" (what tremendous *abdomina* we householders have!) with every suitable appurtenance, before all is done; and when friends are met, there is little chance that Murray will be forgotten. We shall talk over old times, compare old hopes with new fortune; and secure comfort by Sir John Sinclair's celebrated recipe, by *being comfortable.* These are certainly brave times: would they could only be persuaded to come on a little faster.

But I must quit empty imagining, and set before you some specific "facts." You want to be informed how I spend my time here, and what novelties I have discovered in the country

of the Celts. As to my time, it passes in the most jocund and unprofitable manner you can figure. I have no professional labour to encounter that deserves being named; I am excellently lodged, and experience nothing but suitable treatment in all points. There are plenty of books too, and paper and geese; there are mountains of mica-slate, and woods and green pastures and clear waters and azure skies to look at: I read, or write and burn, at rare intervals; I go scampering about on horseback, or lie down by the grassy slopes of the Tay, and look at Schiehallion and Bengloe with their caps of snow, and all the ragged monsters that keep watch around them, since the creation never stirring from their post; I dream all kinds of empyrean dreams, and live as idly as if I were a considerable proprietor of land. Such work, of course, will never do at the long run, and pity that it will not, for it passes very smoothly: but I strive to still my conscience when it murmurs by persuading it that "the poor man is getting back his health." An arrant lie! for I am not getting back my

health; I do not think I shall ever more be healthy, nor does it matter greatly. By and by I shall have learned to go on very quietly without that convenience: I am fast training to it. . . .

You must come and see this country the first month you have at your own disposal. Dunkeld is about the prettiest village I ever beheld. I shall not soon forget the bright sunset, when skirting the base of "Birnam Wood" (there is no wood now), and asking for "Dunsinane's high hill," which lies far to the eastward, and thinking of the immortal link-boy who has consecrated these two spots which he never saw, with a glory that is bright, peculiar, and for ever,—I first came in sight of the ancient capital of Caledonia standing in the lap of the mountains, with its quick broad river rushing by, its old gray cathedral, and its peak-roofed white houses peering through massy groves and stately trees, all gilded from the glowing west. The whole so clear and pure and gorgeous as if it had been a city of fairy-land, not a vulgar *clachan* where men sell

stots,[1] and women buy eggs by the dozen. I wandered round and round it till late, the evening I left you. You must come and see this spot, if you should go no farther.

My paper is done, or I was going to have told you multitudes of things besides. I beg you will write me soon, some leisure hour, and let me have another chance at talking. I have still some hopes of seeing you in Edinburgh before you leave it—perhaps before the end of July. Meantime I long for news of you and it and everything. Nothing but dumb silence here, and the chicking is heard no more.[2] What are you doing or about to do? What writing, or what studying? How is it with the Earl of Stair, and with the world in general? Except for a *Dumfries Courier* and a *Daily Times*, I might as well be living in the fifth Belt of Jupiter. Adieu!—Truly yours,

TH. CARLYLE.

[1] Steers.

[2] Carlyle used to tell of a preacher who compared death to the breaking of the main-spring of a watch, "and the chicking (*Anglice*, ticking) is heard no more."

CXXIV.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

KINNAIRD HOUSE, *1st July* 1823.

. . . There is in fact, I see it more clearly every day, nothing but literature that will serve to make your life agreeable or useful. In your actual situation you have two things to choose between: you may be a fashionable lady, the ornament of drawing-rooms and festive parties in your native district, the wife of some prosperous man who will love you well and provide for you all that is choicest in the entertainment of common minds; or you may take the pursuit of truth and mental beauty for your highest good, and trust to fortune, be it good or bad, for the rest. The choice is important, and requires your most calm and serious reflection. Nevertheless, I think you have decided like a prudent woman no less than like a heroine. I dare not promise that your life will be free from sorrows; for minds like yours deep sorrows are reserved, take the world as you will: but you will also have noble pleasures, and the great intention of your being will

be accomplished. As a fashionable fine lady, on the other hand, I do not see how you could get through the world on even moderate terms: a few years at most would quite sicken you of such a life; you would begin by becoming wretched, and end by ceasing to be amiable.

. . . . . .

I am fast losing any little health I was possessed of: some days I suffer as much pain as would drive about three Lake poets down to Tartarus; but I have long been trained in a sterner school; besides by nature I am of the *cat* genus, and like every cat, I have nine lives. I shall not die therefore, but unless I take some prudent resolution, I shall do worse. . . .

Never mind me, my good Jane: allow me to fight with the paltry evils of my lot as best I may; and if I cannot beat them down, let me go to the Devil as in right I should.

. . . . . .

CXXV.—To Rev. THOMAS MURRAY, Wigton, Galloway.

MAINHILL, *8th August* 1823

MY DEAR MURRAY—I received your two letters in due succession, and great cause I had to commend your friendly activity in my behalf. The virtue of punctuality makes little figure in treatises of Ethics, but it is of essential importance in the conduct of life; like common kitchen-salt, scarce heeded by cooks and purveyors, though without it their wares would soon run to rottenness and ruin. You have managed these Book-concerns admirably; it is very probable that *in return* for your diligence in that matter I may ere long trouble again.

A more suitable *return* would have been to comply with your friendly wish to see me in Galloway during this your holiday excursion. I have thought of it frequently since my arrival here; at one time I had well-nigh determined on treating myself with that delicacy; but the wet weather made my resolutions waver, and the lateness of your visit has at length forced

them to settle on the other side. I must be at Kinnaird on this day se'ennight; I have yet seen no friend in Annandale, except those under my Father's roof: judge then if *I can* set out for your native district when so circumstanced. I have still about fifty ways to go, and having a horse to take with me to the North, I am compelled to set out about Wednesday next, that I may not break down the "gallant gray" before seeing Perthshire. Therefore you must excuse me for this once. Next year, unless the fates have written it otherwise, I intend that we shall ride in company through the whole length and breadth of Brave Galloway, and spend ten days together in seeing all manner of sights and talking all manner of talk. Meanwhile I can only wish you may have better luck than I have had; may find fair skies and pleasant faces everywhere to welcome you, that so you may refresh your faculties of head and heart for another and a busy winter in the city of stench and science (the *focush*[1] of both), where I hope to see you many a, many a merry time.

[1] "An old bankrupt minister had, while staying with

This last month has been among the idlest and barrenest of my existence. My chief pleasure and employment has been galloping, nowhither, amid wind and rain, for the mere sake of galloping. The weather! The weather! If it were not that all men, women, and children in the British Islands have exclaimed ten times a-day for the last six weeks: "Bless me! *such* weather!" I too would say something very pithy on the subject. But what would it avail? Let it rain guns and bayonets if it like; the less I say of it the better.

See that you get along with Stair and these worthies without delay. There is nothing in this world that will keep the Devil out of one but hard labour. Of *my* devils at least I may say: this kind goeth *not* out by fasting and prayer. I will get the weather-gage of him yet. . . .

Jack and I are for Annan spite of the clouds and glar;[1] he is fidgeting like some hen in an

Murray, always referred to Edinburgh as the 'focus (which he pronounced *focush*) of Sosiety.'"

[1] Mud.

interesting condition. So I must leave you for the present.

. . . . . .

I am, always most faithfully yours,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

CXXVI.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.[1]

MAINHILL, 10*th August* 1823.

. . . Have you actually "admonished" the great Centre of Attraction? If not, wait for two months, and you will see his "raven locks and eagle eye" as you have done of old, and may admonish him by word of mouth. I was at Annan; and found *the* Argument for Judgment to Come, in a clear type, just arrived, and news that Irving himself was returning soon to the North—to be married! The lady is Miss Martin of Kirkcaldy—so said his Mother. On the whole I am sorry that Irving's preaching has taken such a turn. It had been much better, if without the gross[2] pleasure of being a newspaper

[1] The greater part of the following extract is printed by Mr. Froude.

[2] "Gross" omitted by Mr. Froude.

Lion and a season's wonder, he had gradually become, what he must ultimately pass for, a preacher of first-rate abilities, of great eloquence and great absurdity,[1] with a head fertile above all others in sense and nonsense, and a heart of the most honest and kindly sort. As it is, our friend incurs the risk of many vagaries and disasters, and at best the certainty of much disquietude. His path is steadfast and manly, in general only when he has to encounter opposition and misfortune; when fed with flatteries and prosperity, his progress soon changes into "ground and lofty tumbling," accompanied with all the hazards and confusion that usually attend this species of movement.[2] With three newspapers to praise him and three to blame, with about six peers and six dozen Right Honourables introduced to him every Sunday, tickets issuing for his church as if it were a theatre, and all the devout old women of the Capital treating him with comfits and adulation, I know that ere now he is "striking the

[1] "And great absurdity" omitted by Mr. Froude.

[2] "Movement" appears as "condiment" in Mr. Froude's copy.

stars with his sublime head:" well if he do not break his shins among the rough places of the ground! I wish we saw him safely down again, and walking as other men walk. The comfort is he has a true heart and genuine talents: so I conclude that after infinite flounderings and pitchings in the mud he will at last settle much about his true place, just as if this uproar had never taken place. For the rest, if he does not write to his friends, the reason is, not that he has ceased to love them, but that his mind is full of tangible interests continually before his face. With him at any time the present is worth twenty times the past and the future; and such a present as this he never witnessed before. I could wager any money that he thinks of you and me very often, though he never writes to either; and that he longs above all to know what we do think of this monstrous flourishing of drums and trumpets in which he lives and moves.[1] I have meant to write to him very frequently for almost three months;

[1] From "The comfort is" to "and moves" omitted by Mr. Froude.

but I know not well how to effect it. He will be talking about "the Lord" and twenty other things, which he himself only wishes to believe, and which to one that knows and loves him are truly painful to hear. See that you do not think unkindly of him; for except myself, there is scarcely a man in the world that feels more true concern for you.[1]

Happy Irving[2] that is fitted with a task which he loves and is equal to! He entertains no doubt that he is battering to its base the fortress of the Alien, and lies down every night to dream of planting the old true blue Presbyterian flag upon the summit of the ruins.

. . . . . .

CXXVII.—To his MOTHER, Mainhill.

EDINBURGH, 19*th August* 1823.

MY DEAR MOTHER—Before leaving this miserable city, in which I have been destined to experience so many vexations first and last, I determined in packing up my great-coat to

[1] This sentence is omitted by Mr. Froude.

[2] The words "after all" are inserted here by Mr. Froude.

enclose a piece of tartan in it to make you a cloak of. It was the best I could find; but surely the knaves have made me take nearly twice as much as was required. You can make yourself a substantial covering from the winter wind out of it in the first [place], and turn the rest into a scarf or whatsoever you think fittest. Wear it when you go to Church or Market, in bad weather, and think with yourself that never mortal was more welcome to all the accommodation such a thing can afford, or more deserving of it at my hands. These little things are of no importance in themselves; but as pledges of mindfulness and affection, they become more valuable than aught else. Wear this, then, for my sake.

I purposed sending down a great-coat for my father; but none could I find of a suitable sort, under about three pounds price; and I doubted if some other more suitable gift could not be got for such a sum. I have therefore postponed the purchase of this, till I hear from home. I wish you would endeavour in a *clandestick* way to ascertain what had best be done. I am *determined* to send my worthy

Father a gift of some kind: the only thing now is to decide what would be of most service to him. Tell me about it, or make Jack tell me: but mention no syllable of it to the goodman.

I have the worst of pens, and my hand is very unsteady; besides I am just about to set forth on my journey. I have been lucky in the weather; but as usual very much disturbed in my sleep. I wish I were at Kinnaird, since I have left Mainhill. Farewell, my dear Mother; you shall come and order my *cottage* for me yet. Sick or whole, I am, ever your affectionate son,

TH. CARLYLE.

CXXVIII.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

KINNAIRD HOUSE, *18th September* 1823.

. . . I was looking out, while there, in the valley of Milk, for some cottage among trees, beside the still waters; some bright little place, with a stable behind it, a garden, and a rood of green—where I might fairly commence housekeeping, and the writing of books! They laughed at me, and said it was a joke. Well! I swear it

is a lovely world this, after all. What a pity that we had not *five* score years and ten of it!

Meanwhile I go on with Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister:* a book which I love not, which I am sure will never sell, but which I am determined to print and finish. There are touches of the very highest most ethereal genius in it; but diluted with floods of insipidity, which even *I* would not have written for the world. I sit down to it every night at six, with the ferocity of a hyæna; and in spite of all obstructions my keep-lesson is more than half through the first volume, and travelling over poetry and prose, slowly but surely to the end. Some of the poetry is very bad, some of it rather good. The following is mediocre—the worst kind.

"Who never ate his bread in sorrow,
Who never spent the darksome hours
Weeping, and watching for the morrow,
He knows you not, ye gloomy Powers.

"To Earth, this weary Earth, ye bring us,
To guilt ye let us heedless go,
Then leave repentance fierce to wring us;
A moment's guilt, an age of woe!"

CXXIX.—To Mr. JAMES JOHNSTONE, Broughty Ferry, Dundee.

KINNAIRD HOUSE, *21st September* 1823.

MY DEAR JOHNSTONE—I have already been guilty of a sin of omission in neglecting so long to send you a letter; I fear I shall now only change it into one of commission by writing to you in the dullest style that ever man used to man. The weather is as delightfully dripping to-day as it has been constantly for the last ten weeks; I am solitary, idle, or disgusted with my work; and cheerful, warm, and inspiriting as the Greenland Moon. Nevertheless, being very anxious to learn how it fares with you, and finding that you will not write till I set you the example, I attack you in spite of all disadvantages.

How *has* that Cupar concern been finally decided—for decided it must needs be ere this? Are you to go thither, or to Dundee, or Annandale, or whither? Is your health good? Your spirits? How is the world wagging with you in all its various departments? Such are the

questions which I wish to be resolved about, with all the speed imaginable. I beg you will tell me; it will do us both good. It is a mournful thing to sit solitary even in joys: how much more when our lot is deeply tinged with woes and difficulties and distresses which often render life a very sorry piece of business. Be assured, my old friend, this case can never be yours while I live, and retain my right judgment about me. Few scenes of my life are more innocently pleasing than those I have passed with you; and the world abounds not so plentifully with deserving people, that I should forget the earliest, almost the only early friend I have. Oh! why cannot I cut out eight years from the past and return to A.D. 1815! We were so cheery then, so busy, so strong of heart, and full of hope! You observe I am verging to the Lake School in sentiment? I will leave it then.

My journey to Annandale, and stay there, offered nothing in the least surprising. It rained *every* day while I was at home; so I could stir nowhither from Mainhill. My only

excursions were two to Annan, in the last of which I returned by Ruthwell. The fashion of this world passeth away! All seemed changed at Ruthwell; Mitchell was not there; Mrs. D. was absent; his reverence and myself were the only interlocutors; and before we got over the threshold of our conversation, it was time for me to rise and ride. I was twice at Bogside, and had many kind inquiries to answer about you, there as well as elsewhere. They wanted to know if you were coming; if you were going, if, etc. etc. Did you get the letter left for you at the Post-office of Dunkeld? I forgot to leave it at Perth. You should write to them without loss of time.

On returning hither I brought out an *elegant* gray pony with me, intending to drive indigestion out of me by dint of riding on it. While at home, I recovered very fast. On the road I was annoyed to the verge of death, by blackguards and whiteguards, noises, slutteries, and all kinds of devilry. Here I am not improving, let me ride as I will. If Satan would be kind enough to carry all the *billusness* of this planet

down with him to Tophet, and keep it there for the use of his boarders, it would be a great improvement in this best of all possible worlds. Patience! Patience! that is the eternal song. I wish only that Disease were a *living thing*, with a tangible carcase, though hideous as the Hyrcanean tiger, that I might grapple with it face to face, and trample it and tread it into atoms, and cast it on the waters and make all the people drink of them!!!

In the meantime I am busily engaged every night in translating Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister:* a task which I have undertaken formally and must proceed with, though it suits me little. There is poetry in the book, and prose, prose for ever. When I read of players and libidinous actresses and their sorry pasteboard apparatus for beautifying and enlivening the "Moral world," I render it into grammatical English—with a feeling mild and charitable as that of a starving hyæna. The book is to be printed in Winter or Spring. No mortal will ever buy a copy of it. *N'importe!* I have engaged with it to keep the fiend from preying on my vitals,

and with that sole view I go along with it. Goethe is the greatest genius that has lived for a century, and the greatest ass that has lived for three. I could sometimes fall down and worship him; at other times I could kick him out of the room. . . .

The people talk of staying here all winter; an arrangement which I by no means like: it is solitary and very dull. They then wish me to go with them to Cornwall in the month of May. If they were not civil, nay kind to me beyond measure, I should have left them ere now. As it is, I am in doubts what should be done. The Post is here! Adieu, my dear friend! Write me instantly and tell me *every*thing—everything!—I am, always your true and old friend,

TH. CARLYLE.

Write instanter!

CXXX.—To his MOTHER, Mainhill.

KINNAIRD HOUSE, 28*th September* 1823.

. . . We are a most fluctuating people, we of Kinnaird. At the beginning of autumn, it was

settled that the juniors of us should go to Edinburgh in winter, the others remaining here; after which one youth was to go to Germany, the other to Oxford, and I to take my leave I supposed for ever and a day. It now appears that we are not to go to Edinburgh, that Arthur need not go to Germany unless perfectly convenient, and that Charlie is learning far better with me than he would have any chance to do at the "southern seat of the Muses." So they have formally asked me if I am willing to accompany them in spring down into Cornwall, where they mean to settle till their sons are educated! I said that but on the score of health I had no manner of objection. This they professed their extreme readiness to do all in their power towards remedying. It appears probable, therefore, that after Whitsunday I may take a farther jaunt to the southward. One thing I am determined on: to have my *own house* if I go thither. I mean to take lodgings if any are to be had near—if not I will almost venture to furnish *the* Cottage I have been speaking of so often. For a man

of my habits and health; it is very sweet to sit by his own hearth—or some friend's which he may call his own. . . .

Thus I am to spend the winter among the highland hills. I shall finish my translation (with which I go on as regularly as clockwork) about February or so; in March or April I must solicit leave of absence for a couple of months to get it printed in Edinburgh; then I shall come galloping down to see you all for three or four weeks; and then dispose of myself according to circumstances. . . .

To-day there came no paper; an omission which in this your most busy season I can very easily excuse. I spent the day in reading part of Irving's *Sermons*, which I have not finished. On the whole he should not have published it—till after a considerable time. There is strong talent in it, true eloquence, and vigorous thought: but the foundation is rotten, and the building itself is a kind of monster in architecture—beautiful in parts—vast in dimensions—but on the whole decidedly a monster. Buller has stuck in the middle of it—"can't fall in with

your friend at all, Mr. Carlyle"—Mrs. Buller is very near sticking. Sometimes I burst right out a-laughing, when reading it; at other times I admired it sincerely. Irving himself I expect to see ere long, though at present I suspect I am a little in disfavour with him. On arriving here I found a letter from him, written (as I found only a little while ago) just two days after the date of mine; to which at first I took it for an answer. On this hypothesis, the thing had rather a cold look; there was very little in it, and that little taken up with assurances to his "Scottish friends" that he *had* not forgot them, the whole carrying an air of *Protection* with it, which rather amused me. So one day when very bilious I wrote a reply of a rather *bilious* character, giving him to know by various indirect and pleasant methods that to certain of his "Scottish friends," his forgetting or remembrance was not a thing that would kill or keep alive. I also told him my *true* opinion of his Book—a favourable one, but some thousand degrees below his own. We have had no further com-

munication. I love Irving, and am his debtor for many kind feelings and acts. He is one of the best men breathing: but I will not give his vanity one inch of swing in my company; he may get the fashionable women and the multitude of young men whom no one knoweth, to praise and flatter—not I one iota beyond his genuine merits. . . .

CXXXI.—To JOHN A. CARLYLE, Edinburgh.

KINNAIRD HOUSE, 20*th October* 1823.

. . . I staid from Monday night till Thursday morning last with Johnstone. I had gone thither to meet Edward Irving and his spouse, though I did not effect this object till I returned to Dunkeld. . . . He himself is the same man as ever, only his mind seems churned into a foam by the late agitations, and is yielding a plentiful scum of vanities and harmless affectations. The hair of his head is like Nebuchadnezzar's when taken in from grass: he puckers up his face into various seamy peaks, rolls his eyes, and puffs like a blast-furnace; talking

abundantly a flood of things, the body of which is nonsense, but intermingled with sparkles of curious thinking, and tinctured with his usual flow of warm-hearted generosity and honest affection. We talked and debated, and the time went pleasantly along. He was for me up to London with him, for three months in summer, to see the world, that so I might begin writing in good earnest. I said nay—the offer being incompatible at present with my other engagements, and at any rate savouring too much of patronage to suit my taste. He is a kind, good man with many great qualities, but with absurdities of almost equal magnitude. He meditates things in which he must evidently fail; but being what he is, he must always retain a high place in the estimation of a certain portion of the public. He and his beloved are returning to Annan in a week or two, where they purpose to make some stay. I shall always wish him well: as men go, I know of no one like him.

"Schiller's Life and Writings" is printed in the last number of the *London Magazine*. The

Editor sent me a letter full of that "essential oil"—flattery, and desiring to have the remainder of the piece without delay. Goethe is in consequence suspended. I begin "Schiller," Part II., to-morrow, if I can. Whenever I am done with it, I will be down with you in Edinburgh to settle about many things which you have to do for me in winter, and see how you are coming on. This, I take it, will be about the middle of November. . . .

CXXXII.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

KINNAIRD HOUSE, *22d October* 1823.

. . . He [Irving] figured out purposes of unspeakable profit to me, which when strictly examined all melted into empty air. He seemed to think that if set down on London streets some strange development of genius would take place in me, that by conversing with Coleridge and the Opium-eater, I should find out new channels for speculation, and soon learn to speak with tongues. There is but very small degree of truth in all this. Of genius

(bless the mark!) I never imagined in the most lofty humours that I possessed beyond the smallest perceptible fraction; and this fraction be it little or less can only be turned to account by rigid and stern perseverance through long years of labour, in London or any other spot in the Universe. With a scanty modicum of health, a little freedom from the low perplexities of vulgar life, with friends and peace, I might do better; but these are not to be found by travelling towards any quarter of the compass that I know of; so we must try what can be done with our present very short allowance of them. Untiring perseverance, stubborn effort is the remedy: help cometh not from the hills or valleys.

. . . . . .

On the whole our friend's mind seems to have improved but little since he left us. He is as full as ever of a certain hearty unrefined good-will, for which I honour him as I have always done: his faculties also have been quickened in the hot-bed of Hatton Garden, but affectation and vanity have grown up as

rankly as other worthier products. It does me ill to see a strong and generous spirit distorting itself into a thousand foolish shapes; putting wilfully on the fetters of a thousand prejudices, very weak though very sanctified; dwindling with its own consent from a true and manly figure into something far too like a canting preacher of powerful sermons. He mistakes too: this popularity is different from fame. The fame of a genuine man of letters is like the radiance of another star added to the galaxy of intellect to shine there for many ages; the popularity of a pulpit orator is like a tar-barrel set up in the middle of the street to blaze with a fierce but very tarnished flame for a few hours, and then go out in a cloud of sparkles and thick smoke offensive to the lungs and noses of the whole neighbourhood. Our friend must order matters otherwise. Unless he look to it, he bids fair for becoming a turgid rather than a grand character; a kind of theological braggadocio, an enlarged edition of the Rev. Rowland Hill, but no great man, more than I or any other of the King's liege subjects.

However, as the preachers say, "I hope better things, though I thus speak." I expect something from the prudence of his wife; more from the changes of fortune that await him. There is a strong current of honest manly affection and wholesome feeling running beneath all this sorry scum; perhaps a clearance will take place in due time. I love the man with all his nonsense, I was *wae* to part with him. . . .

CXXXIII.—To ALEXANDER CARLYLE, Mainhill.

KINNAIRD HOUSE, 2*d November* 1823.

MY DEAR ALICK—Having an hour and a half at my disposal to-day, and an opportunity of conveyance, I hesitate not, though rather stupid, to sit down and send you some inkling of my news. This is the more necessary, as it seems possible enough that ere long some change may take place in my situation; of which I would not have you altogether unapprised.

Your little fragment of a letter was gratifying by the news it brought me that you are busy in

your speculations, lucky hitherto, and bent on persevering. I cannot but commend your purpose. There is not on the earth so horrible a malady as idleness, voluntary or constrained. Well said Byron: "Quiet to quick bosoms is a hell." So long as you are conscious of adding to your stock of knowledge or other useful qualities, and feel that your faculties are fitly occupied, the mind is active and contented. As to the issue of these traffickings, I pray you, my good boy, not at all to mind it. Care not one rush about that silly cash, which to me has no value whatever, except for its use to you. Pride may say several things to you; but do you tell her she has nothing to meddle or make in the case: I am as proud in my own way as you; but what any brethren of our Father's house [may possess] I look on as a common stock, mine as much as theirs, from which all are entitled to draw, whenever their convenience requires it. Feelings far nobler than pride are my guides in such matters. Are we not all friends by habit and by nature? If it were not for Mainhill, I should still find

myself in some degree *alone* in this weary world.

Jack's German "all goes well" appeared on the newspaper last but one: I have vainly sought for it on the last. I suppose he is gone to Edinburgh, or just going; and I hope ere long to have that solacing announcement repeated more in detail. I understand the crop is now in the yard; I trust that it bids fair to produce as it ought; that you have now got in the potatoes also, and made your arrangements for passing the winter as snugly as honest hearts and active hands may enable you. Above all, I trust that our dear Mother and the rest are enjoying that first of blessings, bodily health, without which spiritual contentment is a thing not once to be dreamed of. As for us of Kinnaird, we are plodding forward in the old inconstant and not too comfortable style. The winter is setting in upon us; these old black ragged ridges to the west have put on their frozen caps, and the sharp breezes that come sweeping across them are loaded with cold. I cannot say that I delight in this. My "Bower"

is the most polite of bowers, refusing admittance to no wind that blows from any quarter of the ship-man's card. It is scarcely larger than your room at Mainhill, yet has three windows and of course a door; all shrunk and crazy: the walls too are pierced with many crevices; for the mansion has been built by Highland masons, apparently in a remote century. Nevertheless I put on my gray duffle sitting *jupe;* I bully-rag the sluttish harlots of the place, and cause them make fires that would melt a stithy. Against this evil, therefore, I contrive to make a formidable front. . . .

I believe I mentioned to Jack that they had printed a pitiful performance of mine, Schiller's "Life," Part I., in the *London Magazine*; and sent very pressingly for the continuation of it. In consequence, I threw by my translation, and betook me to preparing this notable piece of Biography. But such a humour as I write it in! . . . What my next movements may be, I am unable to say positively. I must have my Book (the translation) printed in Edinburgh, but first it must be ready. It is not impossible

that I may come down to Mainhill for a couple of months till I finish it. Perhaps after all I may give up my resolution and continue where I am, though on the most solemn deliberation, I do not think such a determination can come to good. Next time I write you will hear more. Anyway you are likely to see me ere long: I must be in Edinburgh shortly, to arrange with Brewster and others. Whether I leave this place finally or not, I have settled that poor Bardolph must winter at Mainhill. A better pony never munched oats than that stubborn Galloway. But they are hungering him here; he gets no meat but musty hay and a mere memorial of corn every day; so he is very faint and chastened in spirit compared with what he was. Out upon it! the spendthrift *is* better than the miser; anything is better. . . .

I meant to write to my Father; but this stomach has prevented me. Give my kindest love to him and our good Mother, and all the souls about home. Tell my Mother to take no anxiety on herself about me, lest anything serious happen to me: at present, two weeks of Annan-

dale air would make me as well as she has seen me for many years. Good-night, my dear Alick! My candle is lit, yet I have not dined, the copper captain being out riding. Write to me the first moment you have, and advise Jack to do it if with you still.—I am, always your faithful Brother,

T. CARLYLE.

CXXXIV.—To JOHN A. CARLYLE, Edinburgh.

KINNAIRD HOUSE, 11*th November* 1823.

. . . You inquire about your general reading; concerning which I regret that I have so little space here for discussing it. There can be no objection to your reading Gibbon, provided you feel spirit enough in you for undertaking at leisure hours so heavy a task as twelve volumes of substantial reading. It is likely to awaken you, read it when you will. History, you have heard me say a thousand times, is the basis of all true general knowledge; and Gibbon is the most strong-minded of all historians. Perhaps, however, you had

better let him be till summer; for he will require all your thought, and at present you have it not all to spare. General literature, as it is called, seems the best thing for you in winter—amusing, instructive, easy. You know the English classics by name: it is little matter in what order you begin them. Johnson's *Life of Boerhaave* you may get; it is, as well as several other lives, the production of his first literary years, therefore slight and trivial compared with his later performances. But nothing that Samuel wrote is unworthy of perusal: I recommend his works especially to your notice; they are full of *wisdom*, which is quite a different thing and a far better one than mere knowledge. You will like him better the older you grow. Swift is also a first-rate fellow: his *Gulliver*, and *Tale of a Tub*, and many of his smaller pieces are inimitable in their way. Have you read all Shakespeare? Have you read Fielding's novels? they are genuine things; though if you were not a decent fellow, I should pause before recommending them, their morality is

so loose. Smollett's too are good and bad in a similar style and degree. One of your first leisure afternoons should be devoted to *Don Quixote:* it is a classic of Europe, one of the finest books in nature. Did you ever see Boswell's *Life of Johnson?* There is a "British Theatre," of which you may read a play or two whenever you feel in the vein. Peter's *Letters to his Kinsfolk*, a worthless book, will give you some idea of the state of literature in Edinburgh at this time: it was in great vogue three years ago, but is now dead as mutton. Then there are poets new and old; Mason's Gray (very good and diverting), Prior (not amiss), Pope (eminently good), in short Campbell's *Specimens of the British Poets* (which you should read immediately—at least vol. i.) will give you names enough of this kind: the living names are Byron, Scott (nearly done), Southey, Coleridge (very great but rather mystical, sometimes absurd), Wordsworth (much talked of), Moore's *Lalla Rookh*, Rogers, Milman, etc. etc. In prose we have Hazlitt (worth little, though clever),

Southey (for history), Washington Irving, etc. etc. Poor Washington is dead three months ago![1] I almost shed a tear when I heard it: it was a dream of mine that we two should be friends! On the subject of these studies I will tell you more when we meet. . . .

When I may see you cannot yet be settled to a day or a week. I shall not start till I am done *at least* with Part II. of "Schiller." I get on with it dreadfully slow: I am now almost half-done with writing it the second time—often harder than the first; some nights I am fitter for the hospital than the writing-desk; all nights (and I never get it touched till then) I am sick and stupid and done, as never man was that persisted in such a task. Nevertheless I do persist, and will do while I live. . . .

CXXXV.—From his MOTHER.

MAINHILL, 15*th November* 1823.

MY DEAR SON—It is a long time since I wrote you. I am deeply in arrears, nor do I

[1] A false report.

hope to get clear at this time, but I hope you will take the will for the deed. I can tell you, however feebly, that I am in my ordinary way of health—much about as when you left us: which I ought to be thankful for, but cannot as I ought, yet I am still spared a monument of mercy. I am just come from sermon, and am thinking where Jack and you have been attending, or whether attending at all, you are much in my thoughts, particularly on the Sabbath mornings. This scene shall soon pass; it becomes us to think, and think seriously, how it will stand with us at last, for surely there is an end of all things. I am glad to hear that your health is improving, though slowly, yet I hope you will be a stout lad yet; may your soul also prosper and be in health. O dear bairn, read the Bible and study it, and pray for a blessing on it. Dear me, what's John about? he promised to write me often when he went away. I miss him on the Sabbath days; is he very throng? it looks like it, but he must write good or bad. Tell me truly how you have stood the storm, and all your

news *much*, and little, and I desire you to take no thought about me. I want for nothing, only if you have any pills about hand you may send me a few down with the box, and be sure to write me as you have dutifully done. I look forward when we shall have a smoke and a cup of tea together, but let us both hope and quietly wait.

I will write you largely next time.—Your affectionate Mother,

MARGARET CARLYLE.

This letter is endorsed: "Old letter of my Mother's,—strangely, found this day,—after forty-five years!—T. C., *12th March* 1868."

CXXXVI.—To ALEXANDER CARLYLE, Mainhill.

KINNAIRD HOUSE, *25th November* 1823.

. . . The Bullers and I have had some further conversation on the subject of my going or staying: they are to give me a letter to George Bell, the celebrated surgeon in Edinburgh, who is maturely to investigate the state of my unfortunate carcase, and see if nothing can be

done to aid me. By his advice I must in some degree be guided in my future movements. They are anxious of course that I should return; but fully prepared for my quitting them should that seem necessary. . . . They are all very kind to me here, and would do anything to make me comfortable, and take me back on almost any terms.

I confess I am greatly at a loss what to do; and for that cause, if there were no other, I am ill at ease. That some change *must* be made in my arrangements is clear enough: at present, I am bowed down to the earth with such a load of woes as keeps me in continual darkness. I seem as it were *dying by inches;* if I have one good day, it is sure to be followed by three or four ill ones. For the last week, I have not had any one sufficient sleep; even porridge has lost its effect on me. I need not say that I am far from happy. On the other hand, I have many comforts here; indeed I might live as snugly as possible, if it were not for this one solitary but all-sufficient cause. I know also and shudder at the miseries of living in

Edinburgh, as I did before; this I will not do. "On the whole," as Jack says, it is become indispensable that I get back some shadow of health. My soul is crippled and smothered under a load of misery and disease, from which till I get partly relieved, life is burdensome and useless to me. We must all consult together, after I have heard the opinion of the "cunning Leech," who I suppose will put me upon mercury; and *see what is* to be done. If I were well, I fear nothing; if not, everything. You need not think from all this that I am dying; there does not seem to be the slightest danger of that: I am only suffering daily as much bodily pain as I can well suffer without running *wud*.[1] So having finished this "Life of Schiller," Part. II., and sent it off to London yesterday, I determine to set off for Edinburgh on Thursday morning; I shall be there on Friday.

. . . . . .

[1] Wild, mad.

CXXXVII.—To JOHN A. CARLYLE, Edinburgh.

KINNAIRD HOUSE, 25*th November* 1823.

I shall be with you on Friday night. . . . It seems very possible that the day after to-morrow, I may take my *final* leave of Kinnaird. In fact I am to consult George Bell, surgeon, and shape my course accordingly. I suppose he will "throw mercury into the system."[1] I fear the system will not care a doit about all his mercury. At all events, I *must* be rid of this horrible condition of body: it absolutely torments me till my soul is dark as the pit of Tophet. I have had no good sleep for above a week. Judge ye in what a pleasing frame of mind I am!

. . . . . .

CXXXVIII.—To JOHN A. CARLYLE, Edinburgh.

KINNAIRD HOUSE, 16*th December* 1823.

. . . Since my return nothing singular has

[1] An incipient physician in Edinburgh had, as reported to Carlyle by Frank Dixon, ordered a patient to "throw vegetable into the system."

happened: I go croaking about with about the usual quantity of sickness to suffer, and the usual quantity of impatience to endure it with. . . . Would to God I might never more have to tell any man whether I am well or ill. . . .

To-day the Proof-sheet of "Schiller" came to hand: the thing fills above two and twenty pages, and seems very weak. If Providence ever give me back my health I shall write very greatly better; if not, not. To-morrow I correct the thing, and send it down again. The third Part is *not begun yet!* I have only been reading Wallenstein; I mean to begin it in two days positively. If it were done, I shall have nothing to mind but Goethe, which is easy.

. . . . . .

CXXXIX.—To Mr. JAMES JOHNSTONE, Broughty Ferry, Dundee.

KINNAIRD HOUSE, 20*th December* 1823.

MY DEAR JOHNSTONE— . . . I need not say that I felt gratified at hearing of your settlement, so respectable and so opportune: I trust

it more than realises all your hopes. These I can gather from your letter were not of the most sanguine kind; indeed it is easy to perceive that such a place is not formed to content you: nevertheless it is a city of refuge in the meanwhile; you may save a few pounds in it; and be constantly on the outlook for some better and more permanent engagement, which you will then be in a case to undertake under far better auspices. I have no shadow of doubt that you will ultimately, and that ere long, be provided for according to your wish. The proportion between your qualities and your hopes assures me of this. You are gathering experience and getting knowledge and making friends. Did Irving ever write to you? He had some notable project in his head about setting you into some school at Haddington; which I had little faith in. Of course he will *not* have written: he writes none. Tell me by the first opportunity, how all things are going with you at the General's.[1]

[1] Johnstone had entered as tutor into the family of a General M'Kenzie, on a salary at the rate of £60 per annum.

Stupid boys are a dreadful curse; and foolish mothers often make it worse: there is no remedy but *patience;* let things take their train without struggling too fiercely against them; you will find it best. There is a text, not quite scriptural, but which suits you exactly in its purport. A minister in the Middlebie pulpit was attempting to preach upon these words: "He that is unholy, let him be unholy still." The poor man, as you know perhaps, could do nothing but repeat and re-repeat the verse, *He that is un, etc.*, having totally forgotten the beginning of his sermon. An upland Proprietor listened to him with increasing impatience, reiterating the words; till at length another *he that is unholy* drove the worthy Laird out of all composure; he started up, squeezed on his hat, and stalked gruffly along the passage muttering: "He that is a confounded Jackass, let him be a Jackass still!" There is much truth in that prayer, much good sense.

I have been in Edinburgh since I saw you. I returned from it only ten days ago. The

increasing pressure of Dyspepsia and discontent were afflicting to such a degree that I came to the resolution of giving up my situation here, of retiring into Annandale and trying for six months by all means under heaven if health of body could not be regained: in the affirmative case, I should be the happiest man alive; in the negative, it was but to go distracted, and take a dose of arsenic and so be done with it. The people of the house advised me that it would be better to consult a Doctor; they seemed also to think it would be using them rather scurvily if I went away at this season. I accordingly delivered my introductory letter to George Bell, who examined me and prescribed to me *secundum artem.* He has given me mercury, and solemnly commanded me to abstain from tobacco in all its shapes. Snuff he says is as pernicious as any other way of it. Do you mark that, Master Brook? I have tasted no morsel of the weed for nearly three weeks. On the whole I cannot say that I am perceptibly better; I have returned hither, to stay with the worthy people till the end of Feb-

ruary, when they leave the place for Edinburgh, and thence for London. Whether I shall accompany them must depend on the state of my "outward fellow," and several other circumstances. In the meantime, I exercise no small philosophy. The aspect of things is dreary and dull; it is all one can do at present to keep from dying of the spleen. These wild moors are white as millers; the roads are ankle-deep with half-melted snow; the very Celts are going about with livid noses, and a drop at the end—the picture of cold and destitution. I read nonsensical books and talk insipidities, and walk to and fro with a greatcoat, galoches, and a huge hairy cap. I ought likewise to be busy; but Satan is in me; I cannot work a stroke. The *second* Part of "Schiller" is printed, yet I cannot for my heart begin the third. This will never do.

. . . . . .

The "literary news" of Edinburgh were of very small account. *Blackwood's Magazine* is said to be going down; the sale is lessening I hear, and certainly the contents are growing

more and more insipid. I hope yet to see it dead: it is a disgrace to the age and country. Talent joined with moral baseness is at all times painful to contemplate. The *New Edinburgh Review*, Waugh's, is with the spirits of its Fathers! They gave it up last number: so perish all Queen Common-sense's enemies! There is a phrenological journal—a journal of Spurzheim's skull doctrine: Error and stupidity are infinite in their varieties, eternal in duration.

I wish you would write to me as soon as possible, and try to predict where we shall meet. It is mournful to think how few friends one has.—I am, always yours,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

CXL.—To his MOTHER, Mainhill.

KINNAIRD HOUSE, 23*d December* 1823.

. . . I am waiting for February, when I go to Edinburgh to get the German book printed. The third Part of "Schiller" is yet to *begin:* but I am so *feckless*[1] at present that I have never

[1] Spiritless.

yet had the heart to commence it. It *must* be done ere long. I spend my evenings mostly in reading, and always about eight o'clock I go into the good people and have one cup of tea with them, and an hour or more of small talk, which lightens the tedium of solitude and makes the night go faster away. It is a sad thing to have to study how to *drive the night away;* a thing which till now I never had occasion to practise: but at present I am reduced to it; it is the best thing I can do. This medicine is a searching business: it leaves me often almost free of pain, but very, very weak. I still have not tasted tobacco in any shape for three weeks: but whether this abstinence does me any good or not I cannot undertake to say. I do not find that it is difficult to give up the practice: never seeing a glimpse of it from week to week, it seldom comes into my head. If I could be sure that it was for my health I would never taste it again while I lived. . . .

CXLI.—From his FATHER and MOTHER.

MAINHILL, *28th December* 1823.

DEAR SON—I have taken the pen in my hand to write a few lines to you to tell you how I come on, but indeed I, for some years, have written so little that I have almost forgotten it altogether, so I think you will scarce can read it, but some says that anything can be read at Edinburgh,[1] so I will try you with a few lines as is, and if it is not readable I will try to do better next time.

I begin then with telling you the state of my own health, which I am glad to say is just as good as I could wish for at my time of life, though frailty and weakness which goeth along with old age is clearly felt to increase; but what can I say? that is natural for all mankind. But I must not leave this subject that way, but tell you that I have not as yet taken the cold that I was troubled with in some

[1] A neighbour's remark, after being unable to decipher what he himself had written, "Let it go; they can read anything at Edinburgh."

former winters; and that I can sleep sound at night and eat my meat and go about the town,[1] and go to the meeting house on the Sabbath Day, so that I have no reason for complaint. I go on next to tell you about our Crop, which doth not turn well out, but our Cattle is doing very well as yet, and we do not fear to meet the Landlord against the rent day. I was down at Ecclefechan this day, and was very glad to find a letter in the office from you, as we were beginning to look for one, and Sandy was preparing a letter for you, and we thought best to join our scrawls together. If there is any news, I leave that for Sandy to tell you all these things, and I will say no more at this time, but tell you that I remain, dear son, your loving Father,

JAS. CARLYLE.

DEAR TOM—I need not tell you how glad I was to receive your kind letter, for I began to be uneasy. . . O my dear Son, I have many mercies to be thankful for, and not the least of these is your affection. We are all longing

[1] Farm boundary, farm.

for February, when we hope to see you here, if God will. Do spare us as much time as possible when you come down; in the meantime let us be hearing from you often.—Your affectionate Mother,

MARGARET CARLYLE.

CXLII.—To ALEXANDER CARLYLE, Mainhill.

KINNAIRD HOUSE, 13*th January* 1824.

MY DEAR ALICK—. . . "Time and hours wear out the roughest day;" this dreary period of pain and idleness and depression and discomfort is now near a close. The old people go down to Edinburgh this day week, and we younger ones follow in about ten days. I am not to revisit Kinnaird. The printing of *Meister* commences immediately on my arrival, and is to be concluded in about two months. About three-fourths of it are yet to translate; for the writing of this weary *Schiller* has occupied me to the exclusion of everything beside. Nor is it finished yet! The *third* and last Part is not above half

done, though it will be wanted in a few days. Till within the last week, I could not for my heart begin it handsomely and honestly. The mercury had made me weak as any sparrow; and besides I was very idly-inclined. So I am now obliged to write like a Turk, and vex myself day and night that the thing is not done faster and better. It certainly satisfies me very little.

Yet the writing of it has done me good. It has yielded myself along with all the trouble considerable pleasure: it is also an improving task, and brings in money. The amount of the whole will be about sixty guineas. Oh! if I were well, I could soon make rich and bid defiance to fortune. The publication of this very mean performance has further raised me considerably in the estimation of these worthy people. About ten days ago the Introduction to Part II., which you have never seen, appeared quoted in the *Times* newspaper; an honour, very slender in itself, but sufficient to astonish the natives in this Gothic district. They begin to look upon me as a youth of

parts superior to what they had suspected. The glory of being approved by "Bloody old Walter," as Cobbett calls the Editor of the *Times*, is no doubt very very small: yet his approval was, so far as I can recollect, almost the *first* testimony to merit on my part which *could* not be warped by partiality, my very name and existence being totally unknown to "Bloody old." Therefore I read it with pleasure: it made me happy for ten minutes; cheerful for a whole afternoon: even yet I sometimes think of it. If I told all this to any other, I might justly be accused of weak and immeasurable vanity: but to you, I know it will give pleasure, as every pleasant thing that happens to me does. Jack and you are the only two to whom I should think of mentioning it. Let us not despise the day of small things! Better times are coming.

Have they sent you Irving's *Orations?* And how are they relished at Mainhill? I still think it was a very considerable pity that he had published them. It is not with books as with other things: *quantity* is nothing,

quality is all in all. There is stuff in that book of Irving's to have made a first-rate work of the kind out of. But it is not dressed, it is not polished. We have not the *bottle* of heart-piercing "mountain-dew," but the *tub* of uncleanly *mash*, or at best of ill-fermented ale, yeasty, muddy, full of hops and sediment, so that no man can drink of it with comfort. There is a sturdy lashing of it in the last *Quarterly Review* (which makes me notice it), apparently by the pen of Southey. It will be well for Irving to attend to these advices of Southey's; for though excessively severe they are all to a certain extent grounded upon truth. Tell me about those "Arguments" and Cobbett, etc. etc., when you next write.

As to this project of the farm, which we were speaking of, I of course cannot, more than you, say anything definite. I do not think my proper place is in the country, but in London or amid some great collection of men. Did my state of health permit it, I think I should go southward without delay. But unfortunately *that* in the present state of matters cannot once

be thought of; and a year's residence in the country would, if convenient, be by far the most profitable speculation I could think of. Nor, for your part of it, am I surprised that you are wearied of Mainhill: it is a place of horrid drudgery, and must always be so. Surely our father and you, by laying heads together, might manage to find out a better. And as to the want of money, I do not think it should be made an obstacle. I have at this time between three and four hundred pounds, for which I have not the smallest use; and certainly independently of all regard to you, I should like better to see the whole or any part of that sum invested in a good farm under your superintendence than lying dormant in the bank. Of this I positively assure you. Except for the education of Jack, this money is of no avail to me: to see it serving any brother that I have is by far the most profitable use I can put it to. I should therefore wish that you would still keep this scheme in your eye; and be ready to give me some more precise account of it against my home-coming. The Bullers are to stay

about three weeks in Edinburgh, after which I partly purpose to come down to Mainhill, and print the Book in Edinburgh—correcting the press by aid of the post. If not comfortably lodged in Edinburgh, I surely shall. I wish I were there even now, riding upon the outside of Dolph, getting back my health and fearing nothing! I am glad to hear that the poor beast is getting up its heart again. Take it forth sometimes and give it a sharp race, observing to keep it at the "high trot." I learned the use of this pace while here: it trains the horse to lift up its feet freely and avoid stumbling. You should also make him carry my Mother down to Sermon on the Sabbath days.

If postage were free I would surely answer at very great length the estimable epistles that accompanied your last. Tell my Father that when I get to Edinburgh I will show him that I have "read" his letter. As for my Mother, she *must write more frequently:* there is nothing to hinder her from writing a sheet full whenever she pleases. No piece of penmanship that I have seen for many a day touched me as

hers did: I will write to her *next* time, that is, whenever I get to Edinburgh—about a fortnight hence or rather more. Do you mind to write *within* that period; my answer will not be long in following. Commend me to the love of all my loved kinsmen and kinswomen. I think of them *all*, but have not room for names. Adieu, my dear Boy!—I am, ever your affectionate Brother,

T. CARLYLE.

CXLIII.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

KINNAIRD HOUSE, *25th January* 1824.

. . . Never let the slowness of your intellectual faculties disturb you. Life is short, but not nearly so short as your fancy paints it: there is time in it for many long achievements, many changes of object, many failures both of our hopes and fears. *Festina lente* is the motto: you make the greatest speed that way; if anything can be attained, you attain it; if nothing, nature did not mean it; she has had fair play, and wherefore should we fret? That you write so slow and can still fix on nothing, I do not

value a rush; in your circumstances, secluded and solitary as you have always been, it is of no account whatever. See! I am half a dozen years older than you; have done nothing else but study all my days, yet I write slow as a snail, and have no project before me more distinct than morning clouds. And do you think, my dear, that I have given up hopes of writing well, as well as nine-tenths of "the mob of gentlemen that write with ease"—far better than almost any of them, when in my vain key? By no manner of means, I assure you: my hopes are as good at this time as they ever were. Faith! and Patience! These are literary as well as religious virtues. Let us fear nothing.

. . . . . .

"Schiller" will be done at last in about a week, God be thanked! for I am very sick of him. It is not in my right vein, though nearer it than anything I have yet done. In due time I shall find what I am seeking. . . .

CXLIV.—To ALEXANDER CARLYLE, Mainhill.

EDINBURGH, 1 MORAY STREET,
10*th February* 1824.

. . . I have got leave of the Bullers for three months, two of which, it was understood, I should devote to translating and printing of the German Novel, and the third to seeing you all at Mainhill, instead of August, after which I was to join them in London, thenceforth proceeding to the burgh of Looe in Cornwall, and establishing myself permanently there as the Tutor of their eldest son. . . . The people have behaved well to me: they have all along treated me with the greatest consideration; of late, they even seem to have some glimmer of affection for me. My small *authorial* labours have elevated me in their esteem; and it says not a little for people such as they are to value intellectual worth at a higher rate than any other. If Mrs. Buller to her other gifts added the indispensable one of being a good housewife, one might live very happily beside her. Buller I have all along esteemed a very unadulterated

specimen of an English gentleman: he is truly honest to the very heart. If I have recovered, as I expect to do at Mainhill, I shall feel no objection to go forth and see them and London both at once. Tell my dear and over-anxious Mother, that going to Cornwall is as easy as going to Waterbeck, for any danger there is in it: the people also are good sober Christians and will use me no way but well. . . .

CXLV.—To ALEXANDER CARLYLE, Mainhill.

EDINBURGH, 1 MORAY STREET,
2d March 1824.

. . . With regard to my home-coming, I have been of various minds. . . . I at last hit on this expedient. I am to translate and print the first two volumes of the book; and whenever these are finished, I set off for home; there to translate the third, and not to trouble Edinburgh with my presence till this is ready for the press. It can after that be printed in ten days; and I get it managed as I pass through the place here, on my way to London.

This at last has been agreed to by all parties. I am accordingly very busy getting my part of it done: I translate ten pages daily; at which rate, I shall be through my allotted task and ready to start for the country somewhat less than three weeks after the present date. Whether or not the Printers will be ready then is another question: but on the whole, you may count on seeing me come down before the beginning of April, to stay about a month. I am as anxious on the subject as any one of you; Mainhill is associated in my mind with ideas of peace and kindness and health of body and mind, such as I do not elsewhere enjoy.

Beyond the circle of my books and papers, I have nothing to do with this heartless and conceited place: I have called on no man since I came within the walls of it; and I care no jot if on turning my back on it three weeks hence, I should never see the vain and hungry visage of it any more. I must call on Brewster to settle accounts; old Dr. Fleming I ought also to see, for the sake of some emblem of kindness I experienced from him; Dr. Gordon also, if I

have time; and then my circle of visits will be concluded. There is one Pearse Gillies,[1] an advocate here, who knows of me, and whom I am to see on the subject of this book; he being a great German Scholar, and having a fine library of books, one or two of which I wish to examine. . . .

CXLVI.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

1 MORAY STREET, *7th March* 1824.

. . . It is a pity on the whole that you have abandoned Gibbon; but it is of no use to struggle against the stream. Dr. Johnson said with considerable justice, that it was hardly ever advisable to read any book against your inclination. Where the inclination is averse, the attention will wander, do as you will. I

[1] The name of Mr. Robert Pearse Gillies is unfamiliar to most readers, but he was a man of much culture who had resided in Germany, and seen Goethe and other celebrities. He had a large acquaintance with literary people in England and Scotland, and his *Memoirs of a Literary Veteran*, published in three volumes in 1851, contains many entertaining sketches and anecdotes of distinguished people. Their most permanent interest, however, lies in some admirable critical letters of Wordsworth's, which are printed in the second volume.

recollect reading Harte's *Gustavus Adolphus* with an immense sacrifice of feeling to will; and I remembered less of it than of any book I ever perused. I trust by and by you will resume Gibbon, and finish both him and Hume. Do you like Robertson? I used to find in him a shrewd, a systematic, but not a great understanding; and no more heart than in my boot. He was a kind of deist in the guise of a Calvanistic priest; a portentous combination! But if you are for fiery-spirited men, I recommend you to the Abbé Raynal, whose *History*, at least the edition of 1781, is, to use the words of my tailor respecting Africa, "wan coll (one coal) of burning sulphur."

. . . . . .

Monday morning.—They have sent me down the remaining sheets of *Meister*, which I must now wrap up and send to you. "Out of economical motives" do not send me back *any* of them. Keep them all lying together in some of your desks or drawers; and when the number is complete we will have them bound together by way of curiosity, and keep them as a

monument of pleasant times. In other respects they are worth nothing: so if you happen to lose one or two of them, do not fret about it: you are to have another copy the moment the book is finished. I fear, however, you will never read it: the romance, you see, is still dull as ever. There is not, properly speaking, the smallest particle of *historical* interest in it, except what is connected with Mignon; and her you cannot see fully till near the very end. Meister himself is perhaps one of the greatest *ganaches* that ever was created by quill and ink. I am going to write a fierce preface, disclaiming all concern with the literary or the moral merit of the work; grounding my claims to recompense or toleration on the fact that I have accurately copied a striking portrait of Goethe's mind, the strangest and in many points the greatest now extant. What a work! Bushels of dust and straws and feathers, with here and there a diamond of the purest water. . . .

CXLVII.—To ALEXANDER CARLYLE, Mainhill.

EDINBURGH, 1 MORAY STREET,
16*th March* 1824.

. . . Since I wrote last I have proceeded pretty regularly with my translation, at the rate of ten pages daily, correcting the proof-sheets as we go along. . . .

One material part of the affair I have already satisfactorily concluded; I mean the bargain with the Bookseller. . . . He is to pay me down £180 on the day of publication, and to make what hand he pleases of the 1000 copies he is printing. This is very handsome payment for my labour, however it may turn; and what I like best of all, it is dry hard cash, totally independent of risks. If the book sell the man will repay himself royally: and he deserves it for his risks. I too shall gain in that case, for after these 1000 copies are sold I am to have £250 for every further 1000 he chances to print. So that it does not by any means seem improbable that within a year I may make £500 more of it; but anyway I have the

£180, fair recompense for my labour, and I am satisfied. . . .

I will likely be with you some time next week. . . . Tell Mother that she must get the teapot overhauled and all the tackle put in order: I am going to stay a month, and mean to drink tea with her very diligently. . . .

CXLVIII.—To Mr. JAMES JOHNSTONE, Broughty Ferry.

HADDINGTON, *Saturday night* [*29th May* 1824].

MY DEAR JOHNSTONE—Your letter was lying for me at the office of Messrs. Oliver and Boyd when I returned from Annandale, last Tuesday night. The newspapers, you must understand, for which you thanked me so cordially, were all transmitted from Mainhill, where I resided from the beginning of April till the day above mentioned. Had my occupation been less incessant, I should undoubtedly have broken your repose, and assisted by my suggestions the "compunctious visitings" of your own not yet altogether seared conscience. But

alas! Goethe and *Meister* kept me busy as a cock upon the spit: it was not till yesterday that I got liberty to leave Edinburgh, and throw that wretched novel off my hands for ever and a day. I am here, spending with a kind and worthy family a brief space of rest before setting off for London and Cornwall. You too are going to Vannes in Brittany! What strange shiftings to and fro in the monstrous whirligig of life! And are we to go without once having met? Old friends to part for we know not how long, and take no farewell? My dear James, I cannot bear to think of it: and I write at present for the purpose of preventing it. This letter reaches you on Monday morning; I sail next Saturday by the steamboat. Could not you contrive to make a start for Edinburgh, and meet me there about Wednesday night, and stay with me the next two days? Or, which would be better, could not you come out hither? I would show you Gilbert Burns, little Brown (now married to Margaret Farries), and the people I am staying with, who could not fail to please you.

Whichever way you like, only do if possible do one of them. Consider how often I have been at Broughty Ferry! I would have gone again in all probability had I had time. Besides, you will see the General Assembly in Edinburgh, and Murray, etc. etc.; and I will give you a copy of *Meister* with you in your pocket, if you have a pocket large enough to hold three volumes 8vo.

In short you must really make an effort: tell the General you have not been a day from home since your arrival; and that in very truth he must give you leave. Write at any rate on Monday night, the letter will not fail to find me here on Wednesday morning; on which morning if you also should embark from Dundee, we might meet in Edinburgh at night. . . . .

I write this in the hurry of an hour after dinner, in momentary expectation of the post. You see the purport of it, and will pardon blunders. My address here is: To the care of Mrs. Welsh, Haddington. Write, and come quickly, and believe me always, my dear Johnstone, your sincere old friend,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

CXLIX.—To his MOTHER, Mainhill.

EDINBURGH, *5th June* 1824.

MY DEAR MOTHER—I am within an hour of sailing for London, and as it is likely to be longer than I anticipated before you hear of me, I scribble you a few lines in the greatest possible hurry, to let you know that it is well with me, and that you must not be uneasy till you hear from me.

I was not more hurt by my journey hither than I expected: I went out to Haddington, and they nursed me with the greatest care till I was completely recovered. . . . The worthy people would not let me leave Haddington; or by dint of making great efforts I might have been in London to-day by the steamboat of Wednesday. To-night I sail in a handsome smack with only four fellow-passengers; Sir Something and two ladies and Mr. Something. The wind is pretty good. We expect to be there in a week. About ten or twelve days after this, the Coach will bring you a letter from me. . . .

Here in Edinburgh I have managed all things quite well. I have just accompanied to Farries' lodgings a packet for home, containing two copies of the Novel for the Boys, some odds and ends for my father, and a small cheap shawl for you. This was selected and cheapened for you at Haddington by my good Jane; a circumstance which I assured her would not diminish its value in your eyes. I saw the Targer[1] for two days; he left me this morning; we are to meet again in London. He goes to France about July; is well enough, I think, but as full of whims as possible. He thought I had poisoned him by pouring *two* not *one* spoonful of milk into his tea this very morning. At least so I declared to him, with much laughter. He is as affectionate and honest as ever. I have got a letter to Thomas Campbell the Poet from Brewster, and one to Telford (for whom I care not two doits): the Doctor promises me a multitude of others, as soon as he can get them written. With Boyd I settled finally, and yesterday converted his bill into

[1] James Johnstone.

a check for £180 payable at sight in London. I rejoice that such was my bargain: I should have been very unhappy else at present. I have also sent off all my copies—8 to London, 2 home, 1 Targer, 1 Murray, 1 Mrs. Brewster, Mrs. Johnstone, Ben Nelson, Waugh, etc. etc. George Bell the surgeon would take *nothing* for his advising and drugs: I gave him a copy also. So that now they are all disposed of together.

Tell Jack that *Wilhelm Tell* is coming for him by Farries: I would have sent the shoes, but could not possibly get them packed. Bid the good Logician, but most faithful brother, write as soon as ever he gets my address. Great things are expected of him by various people. Tell him Boyd will send two *Pauls*[1] down whenever they are ready. I also make him heir to my seal-skin cap: I missed it three minutes after he was gone,—just three minutes too late.

But now my dear Mother I am going. The

[1] John Carlyle's translation of *Paul and Virginia*, published by Boyd.

people are bringing me tea; after which Murray is to come and accompany me down to Leith. I will write directly. There is no danger at all: the weather is beautiful as summer should be: and is not God the ruler of water as of land? May His blessing be upon you all for ever! Give my kindest love to all the posse of brothers and sisters, beginning with Alick and ending with Jenny. Their names and interests are all present with me at this moment. My best affection to my Father. I am always, my dear Mother, your true son,

T. CARLYLE.

CL.—To ALEXANDER CARLYLE, Mainhill.[1]

KEW GREEN, 25*th June* 1824.

. . . When I see you I will tell you of Westminster Abbey; and St. Paul's, the only edifice that ever struck me with a proper sense of grandeur. I was hurrying along Cheapside into Newgate Street among a thousand bustling

[1] The most interesting of the letters written by Carlyle during his stay in England and his visit to France are printed in Mr. Froude's *Life* of him.

pigmies and the innumerable jinglings and rollings and crashings of many-coloured Labour, when all at once in passing from the abode of John Gilpin, stunned by the tumult of his restless compeers, I looked up from the boiling throng through a little opening at the corner of the street—and there stood St. Paul's—with its columns and friezes, and massy wings of bleached yet unworn stone; with its statues and its graves around it; with its solemn dome four hundred feet above me, and its gilded ball and cross gleaming in the evening sun, piercing up into the heaven through the vapours of our earthly home! It was silent as Tadmor of the Wilderness; gigantic, beautiful, enduring; it seemed to frown with a rebuking pity on the vain scramble which it overlooked: at its feet were tombstones, above it was the everlasting sky, within priests perhaps were chanting hymns; it seemed to transmit with a stern voice the sounds of Death, Judgment, and Eternity through all the frivolous and fluctuating city. I saw it oft and from various points, and never without new admiration.

. . . . . .

Did you get *Meister*, and how do you *dis*-like it? For really it is a most mixed performance, and though intellectually good, much of it is morally bad. It is making way here perhaps—but slowly: a second edition seems a dubious matter. No difference! I have the produce of the first lying here beside me in hard notes of the Bank of England, and fear no weather. I bought myself a suit of fine clothes for six pounds; a good watch for six; and these were nearly all my purchases. . . .

CLI.—To ALEXANDER CARLYLE, Mainhill.

BIRMINGHAM, 11*th August* 1824.

. . . I was one day through the iron and coal works of this neighbourhood,—a half-frightful scene! A space perhaps of thirty square miles, to the north of us, covered over with furnaces, rolling-mills, steam-engines, and sooty men. A dense cloud of pestilential smoke hangs over it for ever, blackening even the grain that grows upon it; and at night the

whole region burns like a volcano spitting fire from a thousand tubes of brick. But oh the wretched hundred and fifty thousand mortals that grind out their destiny there! In the coal-mines they were literally naked, many of them, all but trousers; black as ravens; plashing about among dripping caverns, or scrambling amid heaps of broken mineral; and thirsting unquenchably for beer. In the iron-mills it was little better: blast-furnaces were roaring like the voice of many whirlwinds all around; the fiery metal was hissing through its moulds, or sparkling and spitting under hammers of a monstrous size, which fell like so many little earthquakes. Here they were wheeling charred coals, breaking their iron-stone, and tumbling all into their fiery pit; there they were turning and boring cannon with a hideous shrieking noise such as the earth could hardly parallel; and through the whole, half-naked demons pouring with sweat and besmeared with soot were hurrying to and fro in their red nightcaps and sheet-iron breeches rolling or hammering or squeezing

their glowing metal as if it had been wax or dough. They also had a thirst for ale. Yet on the whole I am told they are very happy: they make forty shillings or more per week, and few of them will work on Mondays. It is in a spot like this that one sees the sources of British power. . . .

CLII.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

PARIS, HÔTEL DE WAGRAM,
28*th October* 1824.

. . . France has been so betravelled and beridden and betrodden by all manner of vulgar people that any romance connected with it is entirely gone off ten years ago; the idea of *studying* it is for me at present altogether out of the question; so I quietly surrender myself to the direction of guide books and *laquais de place*, and stroll about from sight to sight, as if I were assisting at a huge Bartholomew fair, only that the booths are the Palais Royal or the Boulevards, and the Shows, the Theatre Français instead of Punch, and the Jardin des

Plantes instead of the Irish giant or Polito's menagerie. . . .

Yesterday I walked along the *Pont Neuf;* jugglers and quacks and cooks and barbers and dandies and gulls and sharpers were racketing away with a deafening hum at their manifold pursuits; I turned aside into a small mansion with the name of *Morgue* upon it; there lay the naked body of an old gray-headed artisan whom misery had driven to drown himself in the river! His face wore the grim fixed scowl of despair; his lean horny hands with their long ragged nails were lying by his sides; his patched and soiled apparel with his apron and *sabots* were hanging at his head; and there fixed in his iron slumber, heedless of the vain din that rolled around him on every side, was this poor outcast stretched in silence and darkness for ever. I gazed upon the wretch for a quarter of an hour; I think I never felt more shocked in my life. To live in Paris for a fortnight is a treat; to live in it continually would be a martyrdom. . . .

CLIII.—To ALEXANDER CARLYLE, Mainhill.

23 SOUTHAMPTON STREET,
PENTONVILLE, 14*th December* 1824.

MY DEAR ALICK— . . . Your letter found me in due season; and a welcome visitant it was. I had not got the *Courier* that preceded it, and the intelligence of your proceedings and welfare was no small relief to me. You must thank our Mother in my name in the warmest terms for her kind note, which I have read again and again with an attention rarely given to more polished compositions. The sight of her rough true-hearted writing is more to me than the finest penmanship and the choicest rhetoric. It takes me home to honest kindness, and affection that will never fail me. You also I must thank for your graphic picture of Mainhill and its neighbourhood. How many changes happen in this restless roundabout of life within a little space! . . .

In London, or rather in my own small sphere of it, there has nothing sinister occurred since I wrote last. After abundant scolding, which

sometimes rose to the very borders of bullying, these unhappy people [the publishers] are proceeding pretty regularly with *the* Book; a fifth part of it is already printed; they are also getting a portrait of *Schiller* engraved for it; and I hope in about six weeks the thing will be off my hands. It will make a reasonable looking book; somewhat larger than a volume of *Meister*, and done in somewhat of the same style. In the course of printing I have various matters to attend to; proofs to read; additions, alterations to make; which furnishes me with a very *canny* occupation for the portion of the day I can devote to labour. I work some three or four hours; read, for amusement chiefly, about as long; walk about these dingy streets, and talk with originals for the rest of the day. On the whole I have not been happier for many a long month: I feel content to let things take their turn till I am free of my engagements; and then—for a stern and serious *tuffle* with my Fate, which I have vowed and determined to alter from the very bottom, health and all! This *will not* be impossible, or even I think

extremely difficult. Far beyond a million of "weaker vessels" than I are sailing very comfortably along the tide of life just here. What good is it to whine and whimper? Let every man that has an ounce of strength in him get up and put it forth in Heaven's name, and labour that his "soul may live."

Of this enormous Babel of a place I can give you no account in writing: it is like the heart of all the universe; and the flood of human effort rolls out of it and into it with a violence that almost appals one's very sense. Paris scarcely occupies a quarter of the ground, and does not seem to have the twentieth part of the business. O that our father saw Holborn in a fog! with the black vapour brooding over it, absolutely like fluid ink; and coaches and wains and sheep and oxen and wild people rushing on with bellowings and shrieks and thundering din, as if the earth in general were gone distracted. To-day I chanced to pass through Smithfield, when the market was three-fourths over. I mounted the steps of a door, and looked abroad upon the area, an irregular

space of perhaps thirty acres in extent, encircled with old dingy brick-built houses, and intersected with wooden pens for the cattle. What a scene! Innumerable herds of fat oxen, tied in long rows, or passing at a trot to their several shambles; and thousands of graziers, drovers, butchers, cattle-brokers with their quilted frocks and long goads pushing on the hapless beasts; hurrying to and fro in confused parties, shouting, jostling, cursing, in the midst of rain and *shairn*,[1] and braying discord such as the imagination cannot figure. Then there are stately streets and squares, and calm green recesses to which nothing of this abomination is permitted to enter. No wonder Cobbett calls the place a Wen. It is a monstrous Wen! The thick smoke of it beclouds a space of thirty square miles; and a million of vehicles, from the dog- or cuddy-barrow to the giant waggon, grind along its streets for ever. I saw a six-horse wain the other day with, I think, Number 200,000 and odds upon it!

There is an excitement in all this, which is

[1] The dung of cattle.

pleasant as a transitory feeling, but much against my taste as a permanent one. I had much rather visit London from time to time, than live in it. There is in fact no *right* life in it that I can find: the people are situated here like plants in a hot-house, to which the quiet influences of sky and earth are never in their unadulterated state admitted. It is the case with all ranks: the carman with his huge slouch-hat hanging half-way down his back, consumes his breakfast of bread and tallow or hog's lard, sometimes as he swags along the streets, always in a hurried and precarious fashion, and supplies the deficit by continual pipes, and pots of beer. The fashionable lady rises at three in the afternoon, and begins to live towards midnight. Between these two extremes, the same false and tumultuous manner of existence more or less infests all ranks. It seems as if you were for ever in "an inn," the feeling of *home* in our acceptation of the term is not known to one of a thousand. You are packed into paltry shells of brick-houses (calculated to endure for forty years, and then fall); every door that

slams to in the street is audible in your most secret chamber; the necessaries of life are hawked about through multitudes of hands, and reach you, frequently adulterated, always at rather more than *twice* their cost elsewhere; people's friends must visit them by rule and measure; and when you issue from your door, you are assailed by vast shoals of quacks, and showmen, and street sweepers, and pickpockets, and mendicants of every degree and shape, all plying in noise or silent craft their several vocations, all in their hearts like "lions ravening for their prey." The blackguard population of the place is the most consummately blackguard of anything I ever saw.

Yet the people are in general a frank, jolly, *well-living*, kindly people. You get a certain way in their good graces with great ease: they want little more with you than now and then a piece of recreating conversation, and you are quickly on terms for giving and receiving it. Farther, I suspect, their nature or their habits seldom carry or admit them. I have found one or two strange mortals, whom I sometimes

stare to see myself beside. There is Crabbe Robinson, an old Templar (Advocate dwelling in the Temple), who gives me coffee and *Sally-Lunns* (a sort of buttered roll), and German books, and talk by the gallon in a minute. His windows look into—Alsatia! With the Montagus I, once a week or so, step in and chat away a friendly hour: they are good clever people, though their goodness and cleverness are strangely mingled with absurdity in word and deed. They like me very well: I saw Badams there last night; I am to see him more at large to-morrow or soon after. Mrs. Strachey has twice been here to see me—in her carriage, a circumstance of strange omen to our worthy [friend]. . . . Among the Poets I see Procter and Allan Cunningham as often as I like: the other night I had a second and much longer talk with Campbell. I went over with one Macbeth, not the "Usurper," but a hapless Preacher from Scotland, whose gifts, coupled with their drawbacks, cannot earn him bread in London, though Campbell and Irving and many more are doing all they can for him.

Thomas is a clever man, and we had a much more pleasant conversation than our first: but I do not think my view of him was materially altered. He is vain and dry in heart; the brilliancy of his mind (which will not dazzle you to death after all) is like the glitter of an iceberg in the Greenland seas; parts of it are beautiful, but it is cold, cold, and you would rather look at it than touch it. I partly feel for Campbell: his early life was a tissue of wretchedness (here in London he has lived upon a pennyworth of milk and a penny roll per day); and at length his soul has got encrusted as with a case of iron; and he has betaken himself to sneering and selfishness—a common issue!

Irving I see as frequently and kindly as ever. His church and boy occupy him much. The *madness* of his popularity is altogether over; and he must content himself with playing a much lower game than he once anticipated; nevertheless I imagine he will do much good in London, where many men like him are greatly wanted. His wife and he are always good to me.

Respecting my future movements I can predict nothing certain yet. It is not improbable, I think, that I may see you all in Scotland before many weeks are come and gone. Here at any rate, in my present circumstances I do not mean to stay: it is expensive beyond measure (two guineas a week or thereby for the mere items of bed and board); and I must have a *permanent* abode of some kind devised for myself, if I mean to do any good. Within reach of Edinburgh or London, it matters little which. You have not yet determined upon leaving, or retaining Mainhill? I think it is a pity that you had not some more kindly spot: at all events a better house I *would* have. Is Mainholm let? By clubbing our capitals together we might make something of it. A house in the country, and a horse to ride on, I must and will have if it be possible. Tell me all your views on these things when you write.

. . . Good night! my dear Alick!—I am, ever your affectionate Brother,

T. CARLYLE.

CLIV.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

PENTONVILLE, 20*th December* 1824.

. . . But I must not kill you with my talk, one little piece of news, and thou shalt have a respite. The other twilight, the lackey of one Lord Bentinck came with a lackey's knock to the door, and delivered me a little blue parcel, requiring for it a receipt under my hand. I opened it somewhat eagerly, and found two small pamphlets with ornamental covers, and—a letter from—Goethe! Conceive my satisfaction: it was almost like a message from Fairy Land; I could scarcely think that *this was* the real hand and signature of that mysterious personage, whose name had floated through my fancy, like a sort of spell, since boyhood; whose thoughts had come to me in maturer years with almost the impressiveness of revelations. But what says the letter? Kind nothings, in a simple patriarchal style, extremely to my taste. I will copy it, for it is in a character that you cannot read; and send it to you with the original, which you are to keep

as the most precious of your literary relics. Only the last line and the signature are in Goethe's hand: I understand he *constantly* employs an amanuensis. Do you transcribe my copy, and your own translation of it, into the blank leaf of that German paper, before you lay it by; that the same sheet may contain some traces of him whom I most venerate and her whom I most love in this strangest of all possible worlds. . . .

CLV.—To ALEXANDER CARLYLE, Mainhill.

LONDON, *8th January* 1825.

MY DEAR ALICK—Your letter came to me the day before Christmas; it is time that it were answered. I am much obliged to you for your punctuality; a virtue which in my situation I am called upon to rival or even to surpass. I have no news for you; only harmless chat; but that and the assurance that there is no *bad* news will repay you for the charge of postage. . . .

Everything goes on with me here very much

as it was doing when I wrote last. . . . I think I have well-nigh decided on returning to Scotland, when this Book is off my hands. This tumultuous capital is not the place for one like me. The very expense of it were almost enough to drive me out of it: I cannot live in the simplest style under about two guineas a week; a sum that would suffice to keep a decent roof of my own above me in my Fatherland. Besides I ought to settle somewhere, and get a home and neighbourhood among my fellow-creatures. Now this London, to my mind, is not a flattering scene for such an enterprise. One hates, for one thing, to be a *foreigner* anywhere; and this, after all that can be said about it, is the case with *every* Scotchman in this city. They live as aliens here, unrooted in the soil; without political, religious, or even much social, interest in the community, distinctly feeling every day that with them it is money only that can "make the mare to go." Hence cash! cash! cash! is the everlasting cry of their souls. They are consequently very "hard characters;" they believe in nothing but

their ledgers; their precept is like that of Iago, "Put money in your purse;" or as he of Burnfoot more emphatically expressed it, "Now, Jock! Get siller; honestly, if thou can; but ony way *get* it!" I should like but indifferently to be ranked among them; for my sentiments and theirs are not at all germane. The first *improvement* they make upon themselves in the South is to acquire the habit of sneering at their honest old country; vending many stale jokes about its poverty, and the happiness of travelling with one's face *towards* the sun. This is a "damnable heresy," as honest Allan Cunningham called it. I have no patience with the leaden-hearted dogs. Often when appealed to that I might confirm such shallow sarcasms, I have risen in my wrath, and branded them with my bitterest contempt. But here they are staple speculation with our degenerate compatriots. BULL himself, again, though a frank, beef-loving, joyous kind of person, *is* excessively stupid: take him out of the sphere of the *five senses*, and he gazes with a vacant astonishment, wondering "what the devil the

fellow *can* mean." This is comparatively the state of all ranks, so far as I have seen them, from the highest to the lowest; but especially of the latter. Of these it is unspeakably so! Yesterday I went to see Newgate, under the auspices of the benevolent Mrs. Fry, a Quaker lady who every Friday goes on her errand of mercy to inspect the condition of the female prisoners. She, this good Quakeress, is as much like an angel of Peace as any person I ever saw: she read a chapter, and *expounded* it, to the most degraded audience of the universe, in a style of beautiful simplicity which I shall not soon forget. But oh! the male felons! the two hundred polluted wretches, through whose stalls and yards I was next carried! There were they of all climates and kinds, the Jew, the Turk, the "Christian"; from the gray villain of sixty to the blackguard boy of *eight!* Nor was it their depravity that struck me, so much as their debasement. Most of them actually looked like *animals;* you could see no traces of a *soul* (not even of a bad one) in their gloating, callous, sensual counten-

ances; they had never *thought* at all, they had only eaten and drunk and made merry. I have seen as wicked people in the north; but it was another and far less abominable sort of wickedness. A Scotch blackguard is very generally a thinking reasoning person; some theory and principle of life, a satanical philosophy, beams from every feature of his rugged scowling countenance. Not so here. The sharpness of these people was the cunning of a fox, their stubbornness was the sullen gloom of a mastiff. Newgate holds, I believe, within its walls more human baseness than any other spot in the Creation.

But why do I write of it or aught connected with it, since in a few weeks I hope to tell you everything by word of mouth? We are on the fifteenth sheet of *Schiller; six* more will set us through it. The moment it is finished, I purpose to decamp. I have given the creatures *four* weeks (they engage for three) to settle everything: I should not be surprised if you met me at the Candlemas Fair on the Plainstones of Dumfries! Soon after the beginning of February I do expect to see old, meagre,

but true-hearted Annandale again. No doubt, you will have the *wark-gear afoot*, that is, the pony in riding order, and everything in readiness for me. When arrived, my purposes are various, and inviting though unsettled. I have written to Edinburgh about a projected translation of *Schiller's Works;* Brewster sends me word that Blackwood (the Bookseller) "has no doubt he will be able to engage with me, in *Schiller* (which, however, he does not seem to relish), or in some other literary object." Blackwood, I believe, is but a knave; and I put no faith in him. Nay, since I began to write this sentence, I have a letter from the scoundrel Boyd "respectfully declining" to engage in that speculation of *Schiller!* So that I rather suppose *it* must be renounced. No matter! There are plenty more where it came from! I am bent on *farming*, for the recovery of my health; nay "marriage" itself is sometimes not out of my ulterior contemplations! But I will explain all things when we meet.

. . . . . .

But the day is breaking up into fair sun-

shine; and I must out to take the benefit of it. Let me have a letter from you, a long one, and a good one like the last, by the very earliest opportunity. Thank my kind true Mother for her note: tell her it will not be long till I answer all her queries by word of mouth. In the meantime, I have a message for her, which I know will please her well, because it is to *do something for me.* Badams prescribes *warmth* above all things: he made me wear close stocking (flannel or rather woollen) drawers even in summer. My Mother once offered to get Peter Little to work me such a pair: tell her that now if she has any wool, I will take them. If she has not, she need never mind in the least: we can settle it,—when—we meet! Do you regularly hear of Jack? He is a letter in my debt for ten days. But I hope the good soul is well. Does he send you the *Examiner?* Has he written you a translation of Goethe's letter to me? I was very glad to hear from the old blade, in so kind though so brief a fashion. I mean to send him a copy of *Schiller's Life*, so soon as it is ready.

Now, my dear Boy, I must take my flight. I have purchased me a small seal and the Carlyles' crest with *Humilitate* and all the rest of it engraven on it. The thing lies at present in Oxford Street, and was to be ready about this time to-day. I am going thither: if I get it, I will seal this letter with it, for your edification. Write directly, and tell me all; the progress of the *Glieen*[1] and everything notable, in and about Mainhill. The smallest incident from that quarter recorded in your pithy style is valuable to me.

Irving and I are as friendly as ever. He is toiling in the midst of many difficulties and tasks, internal and external, domestic and ecclesiastic. I wish him well through them! He is the best man I have met in England. But here, as I told him lately, he has no home; he is a "missionary" rather than a pastor.— My Father has never written to me: I should like much to see his hand in London. Give my warmest love to him and Mother, and all the *brethren* and sisters, beginning with Mag and

[1] Wild cherry. The phrase here means trivial news.

ending with Jenny. Write soon, good Alick!—I am, ever your true Brother,

T. CARLYLE.

CLVI.—To JOHN A. CARLYLE, Edinburgh.

PENTONVILLE, 22*d January* 1825.

MY DEAR JACK—In a paper which would reach thee yesterday, I promised to write, whenever that *Life of Schiller* was off my hands; an event which I expected would take place this present Saturday. A man may speculate about his own capacities of action; but woe to him if his calculations include the indolence and capricious mischances of others. Two sheets of this poor book are still to print; and I do not hope to be rid of it for another week. On the whole, it is going to be a very pitiful but yet not utterly worthless thing; a volume of three hundred and fifty pages, with portrait, extracts, etc.; not well printed, worse written, yet on the whole containing nothing that I did not reckon true, and wanting nothing which my scanty and forlorn circumstances allowed me to

give it. So I "commit it silently" either to "everlasting Time," or everlasting oblivion; caring no jot about what the despicable gang of newspaper and magazine critics say of it, or whether they speak of it at all. I do find there is nothing but this for it: Convince yourself that your work *is* what you call it, as nearly as your honest powers could make it; and the man who censures it either tells you nothing that you did not know before, or tells you lies; both of which sorts of intelligence you will find it a very simple matter to light your pipe with. There was a luckless wight of an *opium-eater* here, one De Quincey, for instance, who wrote a very vulgar and brutish Review of "Meister" in the *London Magazine*. I read three pages of it one *sick* day at Birmingham; and said: "Here is a man who writes of things which he does not rightly understand; I see clean over the top of *him*, and his vulgar spite, and his commonplace philosophy; and I will away and have a ride on (Badams') Taffy, and leave *him* to cry in the ears of the simple." So I went out, and had my ride accordingly; and if

De Quincey, poor little fellow, *made* anything of his review, he can put it in his waistcoat pocket, and thank the god Mercurius. A *counter*-criticism of *Meister* (or something like one) is to appear in the February number, I believe: to this also I hope I shall present the same tolerant spirit. The "reviews" of that book *Meister* must not go without their effect on me: I know it and believe it, and feel it to be a book containing traces of a higher, far higher, spirit, altogether more *genius*, than any book published in my day: and yet to see the Cockney animalcules rendering an account of it! praising it, or blaming it! Sitting in judgment on Goethe with the light tolerance of a country Justice towards a suspected Poacher! As the child says: "It was *grend!*"[1] . . . .

CLVII.—To his MOTHER, Mainhill.

23 SOUTHAMPTON STREET, PENTONVILLE,
31*st January* 1825.

. . . The *Life of Schiller* is now fairly out

[1] Part of the rest of this letter is in Froude's *Life*, i. 292.

of *my* hands; the Booksellers engage to show it on their counters on Wednesday; they send a parcel of copies off to Edinburgh forthwith; then they must pay me my £90; after which I care not if they let the thing lie and rot beside them till the day of Doom. On the whole, it will make a reputable sort of book; somewhat larger than a volume of *Meister*, with a portrait, etc.: I have not put my name to it, not feeling anxious to have the syllables of my poor *name* pass through the mouths of Cockneys on so slender an occasion; though, if any one lay it to my charge, I shall see no reason to blush for the hand I had in it. Sometimes of late I have bethought me of some of your old maxims about pride and self-conceit: I do see this same vanity to be the root of half the evil men are subject to in life. Examples of it stare me in the face every day: the pitiful passion, under any of the thousand forms which it assumes, never fails to wither out the good and worthy parts of a man's character; and leave him poor and spiteful, an enemy to his own peace and that

of all about him. There never was a wiser doctrine than that of *Christian humility*, considered as a corrective for the coarse unruly selfishness of men's nature.

I will send *you* a copy of this *Schiller;* and I know you will read it with attention and pleasure. It contains nothing that I know of but *truth* of fact and sentiment; and I have always found that the honest truth of one mind had a certain attraction in it for every other mind that loved truth honestly. Various quacks, for instance, have exclaimed against the *immorality* of *Meister;* and the person whom it delighted above all others of my acquaintance was Mrs. Strachey, exactly the most religious, pure, and true-minded person among the whole number. A still more convincing proof of my doctrine was the satisfaction *you* took in it. *Schiller*, though it flies with a low, low wing, compared with *Meister*, will have less in it to offend you. What is it, in fact, but your own sentiments, the sentiments of my good true-hearted mother, expressed in the language and similitudes

that *my* situation suggests? So you *must* like it.[1]

. . . . . .

CLVIII.—To ALEXANDER CARLYLE, Mainhill.

PENTONVILLE, 14*th February* 1825.

MY DEAR BROTHER—I expected by this time almost to have been at Mainhill; and the date of my departure even from London is still in some degree uncertain. I am afraid our Mother will be getting anxious about me; so I sit down in the midst of bustle and hurry to assure you all that I am quite well, and prevented from coming home by no cause productive of any evil to me.

I expected that this weary *Life of Schiller* would have been published a fortnight ago; and just when everything was ready on my part, the engraver discovered that the portrait was not right, and would require at least two weeks before it could be put properly in order!

[1] The greater part of the rest of this letter is printed (incorrectly as usual) by Froude, *Life*, i. 294.

Of course I felt terribly enraged at this new delay; but what, alas, would rage do for me?

. . . . . .

Meanwhile, except perhaps for the loss of time, I feel perfectly comfortable here. Irving and I talk of all things under the sun, in the friendliest and most *edifying* manner; and all my friends vie with one another in kindness to the departing dyspeptic. Several of them would fain retain me; and had I not vowed inflexibly to recover health of body in preference to all things, I should be strongly tempted to listen to their solicitations. But I feel that I *may* grow completely well again; and seven years of perpetual pain have taught me sharply that to this consideration *every*thing should give way. I hope, however, not to leave England for good and all at present; I have got real friends here, whom I should be sorry to quit for ever. Mrs. Strachey and I are to correspond by letters; so also are Mrs. Montagu and I: the former has presented me with a beautiful gold pencil; the latter with a seal bearing Schiller's dying words, "*Calmer*

and Calmer," for an inscription; both of which pledges I design to keep with great fidelity as memorials of worthy and kind people.

For my future occupation, I have settled nothing yet definitely. The Booksellers Taylor and Hessey have offered me £100 for a *Life of Voltaire*, to be composed like this of *Schiller*.

. . . . . .

A copy of *Schiller* will reach you through Edinburgh, ere long. It is a very reasonable looking book; and promises to act its part in society very fairly. If I can find nothing better to do, I will write a whole string of such books. Literary fame is a thing which I covet little; but I desire to be *working* honestly in my day and generation in this business, which has now become my trade. I make no grain of doubt that in time I shall penetrate the fence that keeps me back, and find the place which is due to me among my fellow-men. Some hundreds of stupider people are at this very time doing duty with acceptance in the literature of the time. We shall see: I am not at all in a hurry; the time will come. . . .

THOMAS CARLYLE.

CLIX.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

BIRMINGHAM, 28*th February* 1825.

. . . My projected movements, you perceive, have been altogether overturned; far from the danger of surprising you by my presence, I am yet a week from Annandale, and perhaps three weeks from you. The poor Book was ready on my part at the time predicted; but just two days before the appointed time of publication, our Engraver discovered that the plate was incomplete, and could not be *properly* rectified in less than a fortnight. As I had myself recommended this man to the job, on the faith of Irving's testimony that he was an indigent *genius*, I had nothing for it but to digest my spleen in silence, and to tell the *feckless spcldring*[1] of a creature, that, as his future reputation depended on the work, he was at liberty to do his best and take what time he needed for so doing. I settled with Hessey for my labour; had ten copies done up in their actual state for distribution in

[1] Feeble sprat.

London; and so washed my hands of the concern, after exacting a solemn promise that they would lose *no* time in forwarding the rest to Edinburgh. The fortnight is already past and another fortnight to keep it company; yet I left Bull[1] still picking and scraping at his copper, still "three days" from the end of his labour! So much for the patronage of genius! Yet I suffer willingly; for my purpose was good, and this poor Cockney has actually a meritorious heart; and a meagre, patient though dejected wife depends upon the scanty produce of his burin. In two weeks from the present date, I calculate that you *will* see *Schiller;* sooner I dare not promise. It will do little, I conjecture, to justify your impatience; yet as the first fruit of a mind that is one with yours forever, I know that it will meet a kind reception from you; and with your approbation and my own, the chief part of my wishes in the way of *fame* are satisfied. I have not put my name to it; for I desire no place among "the mob of gentlemen that write with ease;" and

[1] The engraver of the portrait of Schiller.

if mere selfish ambition *were* my motive, I had rather not be named at all, than named among that slender crew, as the author of a lank octavo with so few pretensions. I seem to see the secret of these things. Let a man be *true* in his intentions and his efforts to fulfil them; and the point is gained, whether he succeed or not! I smile when I hear of people dying of Reviews. What is a reviewer sitting in his critical majesty, but *one* man, with the usual modicum of brain, who thinks ill of us or well of us, and tells the Earth that *he* thinks so, at the rate of fifteen guineas a sheet? The vain pretender, who lives on the breath of others, he may hurt; but to the honest workman who understands the worth and worthlessness of his own performance, he tells nothing that was not far better understood already, or else he tells weak *lies;* in both of which cases his intelligence is one of the simplest things in Nature. Let us always be true! Truth may be mistaken and rejected and trodden down; but like pure gold it cannot be destroyed: after they have crushed it and burnt it and cast it on the waters, they

cry out that it is lost, but the imperishable metal remains in its native purity, no particle of it has been changed, and in due time it *will* be prized and made to bless mankind to all ages. If literature had no evils but false critics, it would be a very manageable thing. By the way, have you seen the last number of the *London Magazine?* Taylor told me it had a "*letter to the Reviewer of Meister*" by some man from Cambridge. I suppose it may be very stupid: but I have not read it, or the criticism it is meant to impugn. Goethe is the Moon and these are penny-dogs; their barking *pro* or *con* is chiefly their own concern. I mean to send the venerable Sage a copy of this *Schiller:* I like him better than any living "man of letters," for he is a *man*, not a *dwarf of letters*. . . .

CLX.—To ALEXANDER CARLYLE, Mainhill.

BIRMINGHAM, *4th March* 1825.

MY DEAR ALICK—No piece of news that I have heard for a long time has given me more

satisfaction than the intelligence contained in your letter of yesterday. For several weeks I have lived in a total dearth of tidings from you; and both on account of your welfare, and of our mutual projects in the farming line, I had begun to get into the fidgets, and was ready to hasten homewards with many unpleasant imaginations to damp the expected joy of again beholding friends so dear to me. It now appears that all is exactly as it should be: you are proceeding in your usual style at Mainhill; and a dwelling-place upon the summit of Repentance-height has already been provided for me.[1] This latter incident, I confess, was beyond my hopes. I feared we should be obliged, so soon as I arrived, to commence the

[1] For a description of Hoddam Hill, see *Reminiscences*, i. 285, and *Life*, by Froude, i. 298.

During the year spent at Hoddam Hill Carlyle was busy with the translation of *Specimens of German Romance*, which appeared in 1827 in four volumes.

"With all its manifold petty troubles, this year at Hoddam Hill has a rustic beauty and dignity to me; and lies now (1867) like a not ignoble russet-coated Idyll in my memory; one of the quietest, on the whole, and perhaps the most triumphantly important of my life." See the remainder of the striking passage, of which this is the first sentence, in the *Reminiscences*.

weary task of farm-hunting; in which, as the season was already far spent, it seemed likely enough that we should fail this year as we had done last, and the date of my establishment might be postponed for another twelvemonth. Happily all this is obviated. I make no doubt that Blackadder's place will fit us perfectly: the house, I conjecture, and partly recollect, is one of the best of its kind in the district; and as for the management of the land, knowing your industry and our general resources, I am under no apprehension. Once fairly settled in that elevated position, we shall go on with the greatest *birr*.[1] . . .

I expect to see you all in a few days; but in the meantime let not my absence in the least impede your movements. It is only in the furnishing of two apartments in the *house* that I can give you any useful counsel. Proceed, therefore, in laying in your necessary stock and implements as if you had my express and particular sanction. Get the *tack*[2] or minute of

[1] Force (*literally*, the whirring of a pheasant on rising).

[2] Lease.

tack drawn out in *your own name*, for I am but as a lodger, and should make no figure in the character of one of Hoddam's tenants. The *entry*, I suppose, will not take place till Whitsunday; but you will need to commence your ploughings and other preparations without delay. Let not my absence cause you to lose a moment. Take money from the Bank, and transact with it as you see proper. I think two such philosophers should show an *example* to the rude boors of Annandale: without "farming by the book," I hope we shall make a different thing of it than a routine clodhopper who thinks the world is bounded by "the five parishes," would make of it.

My Mother need not be assured of the pleasure I feel in having this prospect of being once more under her superintendence. . . . She speaks of knives being cheap in Birmingham; but I fear I am a bad merchant anywhere. The people seem to read in my face that I cannot higgle or beat down their prices; so they almost always overcharge me. Nevertheless I mean to try. But we shall need many things

of that domestic sort; and our good Mother shall take a journey to Dumfries and buy them according to her own sagacity by the lump. It is like a sort of marriage; at least, it is a house-heating! Let us be thankful that we are all to be together: all still spared to be a blessing to each other. . . .

It is not without regret that I leave England; and I cling to the hope of often seeing it again. I have found more kindness in it than I ever found in any other district of the Earth, except the one that holds my Father's house. If stony Edinburgh be no better to me than it was, I will shake the dust off my feet against it, and abide in it no more. My health will return, and then I shall be ready for any scene. There are warm hearts everywhere, but they seem to meet one with greater frankness here. Yesterday I had a letter from Mrs. Strachey, which was soon followed by a box containing a *new* present of the most superb writing-desk I have ever seen! I should think, with its accompaniments, it cannot have cost much less than twenty guineas. I am writing on it at

this moment, and design to keep it as a precious memorial all my days. These are things that make me wonder.

. . . The sheet is done. Adieu, my dear Brother.—I am, always yours,

TH. CARLYLE.

I hope my Father approves of all these farming schemes, and will not think of burthening himself further with Mainhill and its plashy soil when the lease has expired. If I write again it will be to him. Meanwhile give my warmest love to every mortal about home, beginning with my trusty Mag and ending with the youngest stay of the house, little Jenny. Tell my Mother I have a book for her, a present from Irving, which he hopes she will like. The time is done; I must be gone.

CLXI.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

MAINHILL, 22*d May* 1825.

. . . I am living here in the middle of confusion worse confounded: the cares that occupy me

are not those of the philosopher on paper, but of the philosopher *in foro;* it is not the talents of the *bel esprit* but those of the upholsterer that will stead me. There is no syllable of translation, far less of composition (save of bed-hangings, and green or yellow washes), nor will there be for two good weeks at least; nothing but cheapening and computation, and fighting with the pitiful details of Whitsunday,[1] and future housekeeping. I have read nothing, but half of one German novel, last Sunday! Not long ago, all this would have made me miserable; but at present I submit to it with equanimity, and even find enjoyment in the thought that in this humblest of the spheres of existence I am *doing* all I can to save my spirit and my fortunes from the shipwreck which threatened them, and to fit me for discharging to myself and others whatever duties my natural or accidental capabilities, slender but actually existing as they are, point out and impose upon me. Alas, Jane! there is *no* Bird of Paradise;

[1] Scotch Term-day, on which Carlyle entered upon his tenancy of Hoddam Hill.

nothing that can live upon the odour of flowers, and hover among pure ether, without ever lighting on the clay of Earth! The eagle itself must gather sticks to build its nest, and in its highest soarings keep an eye upon its creeping prey. Once I thought this a sad arrangement; now I do not think so. "The mind of man" is a machine considerably more complex than a pepper or even coffee mill; there is a strength and beauty where at first there seemed only weakness and deformity; our highest happiness is connected with our meanest wants. I begin to approve of this. At any rate *wir sind nun einmal so gemacht*, and there is an end of it.

One thing that pleases and consoles me at present is my increased and increasing faith in the return of health, the goal of all these efforts. I am already *wonderfully* better than when you saw me: I am a driveller if, in spite of all impediments from others and myself, I do not grow completely well. The thought of this is like a second boyhood to me: glimpses of old purposes and feelings dawn on my horizon with an aspect more earnest

but not less lovely; I swear that I will be a *wise man*. . . .

I more and more applaud myself for having fled from towns, and chosen this simple scene for the commencement of my operations. Heaven pity those that are sweltering to-day along the fiery pavements of London, begirt with smoke and putrefaction and the boundless tumults and distractions of that huge tread-mill! Here I can see from Hartfell to Helvellyn, from Criffel to the Crags of Christenberry; a green unmanufactured carpet covers all the circle of my vision, fleecy clouds and the azure vault are above me, and the pure breath of my native Solway blows wooingly through all my haunts. Internally and morally, the difference is not less important in my favour. Stupidity and selfishness make up the general character of men in the country as they do in towns; but here one has the privilege of freedom from the sight of it; all dunces and Turks in grain, one transacts his painful hour of business with and packs away, with an implied injunction, peremptory though

unpronounced, not again to trouble one till another hour of business shall arrive. "But then society?"—There is little of it on Earth, very little: and unhappy is the man whose own door does not enclose what is worth all the rest of it ten times told. . . .

On Thursday we split up our establishment here, and one division of us files away to Hoddam Hill. What a hurly-burly, what an anarchy and chaos! In less than forty days, the deluge will abate, however; and the first olive branch (of peace and health) will show itself above the mud. My literary projects are till then stationary, but not unfit for moving in a calmer time. Crabbe Robinson has written to me; I saw Sir W. Hamilton (apparently among the best men I have ever met in Edinburgh), and Dr. Irving introduced me to Dr. Julius (Yooliooss) of Hamburg,[1] who almost embraced me as a father, because I had written

[1] A widely-travelled scholar and philanthropist. He was in the United States in 1834-35, studying systems of prison discipline, to report on them to his government. His name occurs in the *Life of Ticknor*, whose *History of Spanish Literature* he translated into German.

a Life of Schiller and translated a novel of Goethe's. Julius is a man of letters; as well as a Doctor, and a person of official dignity, being sent by his government to investigate the laws of quarantine, which our parliament now meditates altering. I regretted that my previous arrangements hindered me from seeing him above an hour; but I liked him much, and he promised to write me his advice regarding these German books some time in Summer. So far all is well.

I had left my trunks at Moffat, and they did not come till two days after my arrival. Your little box I opened in the presence of many eager faces; your gifts were snatched with *lauter Jubelgeschrei;* I question if ever gifts were welcomed with truer thanks or gave more happiness to the receivers. All stood amazed at the elegance of their "very grand" acquisitions, some praised in words the generous young *leddy* who had sent them, little Jenny flourished her green bag "like an antique Maenad," and for the whole evening was observed to be *a wee carried,* even when the first blush of the business

was over. My Mother was as proud (*purse*-proud) as any. . . .

Can you execute a commission for me, and will you? James Johnstone the meek pedagogue, of whom you have heard me speak, is returned from France, and wishes to exchange his present place of Tutor in a family at Broughty Ferry for some permanent appointment in a school. Will you walk over any day to Grant's Braes, and ask Gilbert Burns if there *is* to be a parish-school in Haddington, and when and how, and send me word minutely when you write? I love this good simple man, and would gladly see him settled in a station which he could fill with such profit to himself and others. This is a prosaic charge I give you: but for my sake and your love of goodness you will accomplish it. . . .

CLXII.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

HODDAM HILL, *August* [?] 1825.

. . . Poor miserable sons of Adam! There is a spark of heavenly fire within us, an ethereal

glow of Love and Wisdom, for it was the breath of God that made us living souls; but we are formed of the dust of the ground, and our lot is cast on Earth, and the fire lies hid among the ashes of our fortune, or burns with a fitful twinkle, which Chance, not we, can foster. It makes me sad to think how very small a part we are of what we might be; how men struggle with the great trade-winds of Life, and are borne below the haven by squalls and currents which they knew not of; how they toil and strain, and are again deceived; and how at last tired nature casts away the helm, and leaves her bark to float at random, careless to what unknown rock or shore the gloomy tide may bear it. Will affection also die at last in that inhospitable scene? Will the excellent become to us no better than the common, and the Spirit of the Universe with his thousand voices speak to us in vain? Alas! must the heart itself grow dull and callous, as its hopes one after the other shrink and wither? "*Armseliger Faust, ich kenne dich nicht mehr!*"

You perceive my preaching faculty is not a whit diminished, had I opportunity to give it scope. This place in fact is favourable for it. . . . My Mother does not know that I am writing to you, or her "kindest compliments" would form a portion of my letter. She is far from well in health, and has not like me the hope of ever recovering it. *Her* country is on the other side of the Stars! I were a Turk if I did not love her.—Jane was here the other night; she is sewing *Samplers*, stitching-in names and robin-redbreasts and all sorts of mosaic needlework. Among a crowd of vulgar initials, I asked her what the "J. W." meant? who was he? She paused; then with a look of timorous archness, answered: "It's no a *he* ava'!" . . .

CLXIII.—To Mr. JAMES JOHNSTONE, Broughty Ferry.

HODDAM HILL, 26*th October* 1825.

MY DEAR JOHNSTONE—I was last night assisting at the late but jovial celebration of the

Mainhill *Kirn*,[1] and happened among other members of the party to meet with honest Gavin of Bogside, one of whose first announcements was that he had a few days ago had a letter from you, containing compliments to me, and a memento that in the article of correspondence I was your debtor. This I had for some time known, and felt with proper repentance, and purposes of alteration; Gavin's hint falls in timefully with a slight interval in my occupation; and to-day I mean to clear scores.

Your last letter with the news of your Haddington journey found me in a season of busy dissipation, but was cordially welcomed, and afforded true satisfaction, I may say, to every individual of the family. We all rejoice in your prospects of a settlement, and feel great confidence that you will succeed both in obtaining and happily conducting the employment.[2]

[1] Harvest home festival.

[2] Johnstone "heard of Haddington Parish School, applied to me; I sent him with his testimonials, etc., to *her:* she, generous heroine, adopted his cause as if it had been mine and her own; convinced Gilbert Burns (a main card in such things), convinced etc. etc.; and, ere long, sees him *admitted*,

In Haddington and its neighbourhood you will find many worthy persons of the stamp you like; among whom you will be able to fix down, as in a home, and feel yourself "a man among your fellow-men." Gilbert Burns I regard as a most estimable character; and I think you may now count on his forwarding your object by all means in his power, as well as rendering it agreeable to you should you attain it. I am told that he has far more to say in the affair than any other. I will give you more introductions should you go to settle there; and in a short time you will need none. Brown the late Burgher Preacher has left that quarter, and come to settle at Moffat; so that the coast is now clear. Let us rejoice in the prospect of any luck at all, in this most magnificent earth; and "be thankful," as the late Mr.

as fairly the fittest man! He started, prospered, took an Annandale wife; 'fortunate at last!'—but, alas, his poor agues, etc. (contracted in Nova Scotia), still hung about him, and in five or six years he died. I think I saw him only *twice* after [1826], once at Haddington, in his own house with wife and little daughter; once at Comley Bank on a Saturday till Monday: rather dreary both times; and I had, and again have, to say, Adieu, my poor good James!"—T. C., 1869.

M'Leod of Brownknowe was wont to say, "that we are not in Purgatory"!

Of my own history since you left these parts, I need say but little. Few persons in the British Isles have spent an idler summer than I, and it is long since I spent one as happy. Basil Montagu of London wishes it to be written on his tombstone that he was "a lover of all quiet things;" but in my own opinion I (and several snails) may with justice dispute him the pre-eminence in this distinction. I have done, thought, felt, or spoken very little since I saw you. At times I get into a Highland anger at this arrangement; and of late I have begun to change it a little; but on the whole I think it prudent to content myself with my present modicum of even negative good fortune, and like a prudent Christian to *jook* [duck] *and let the jaw* [gush] *gae by*, however hard my stance may be, so it but even moderately shelter me. I believe myself to be improving in point of health; and with health I calculate that many other blessings will be restored to me. "I have been at school for

many years under the tuition of a pedagogue called Fate; he is an excellent teacher, but his fees are very high, and his *tawse*[1] are rather heavy. By and by I shall become a good child, and the old knave will cease to flog me.

We live here on our hill-top enjoying a degree of solitude that might content the great Zimmermann himself. Few mortals come to visit us, I go to visit none; I have not even once been down at Ruthwell since my return to Scotland! No news, literary, political, or economical, get at us; except perhaps a transient hint of the Stagshaw or Falkirk Tryst, or a note of jubilee at the present *fairish* prices of oats and barley. Like Gallio of old I care for none of these things. My heart is weary of the inane toils of mortal men; I have gladly given them up the world for a season "to make a kirk and a mill of,"[2] if it please them; all I require is that they would be so good as "leave me, leave me to repose." Perhaps a better day is coming; if not, *qu'importe?* "The mind of man,"

[1] Lashes.

[2] Scotch proverb = in fee simple.

it appears from Mr. Smith, late cordwainer in Ecclefechan, "can accommodate itself to circumstances." Let it do so, and be hanged to it! . . .

Edward Irving was in Annan last week for a little while; and I passed half a day with him. He is of a green hue, solemn, sad, and in bad bodily condition. The worthy man (for so he is, when every say is said) has lost his boy at Kirkcaldy, and left his wife there, who had brought him a daughter only ten days before that event. He bears it well; for his heart is full of other wondrous things, from which he draws peculiar consolation. He seems, as his enemies would say, still madder than before. But it is not madness: would to Heaven we were all thus mad! He is about publishing another Book, or Prophecy. Irving is actually one of the memorabilia of this century.

In the last *Edinburgh Review* you would find a critique of *Wilhelm Meister*, apparently by Jeffrey himself. It amused me not a little; and, I may say, gratified me too. I think the critic very honest, and very seldom unjust in

his feeling of individual passages; but for the general whole, which constitutes the essence of a work like this, he seems to have no manner of idea of it, except as a heap of beautiful and ugly fragments. True criticism, thanks to our Reviews and Magazines, bids fair to become one of the *artes perditæ* ere long: And then—"then joy old England raise," for thy mob of gentlemen will have halcyon times, goose feathers will rise in value, and paper will again be manufactured from straw! Jeffrey's little theory of Goethe is an exquisite affair. Yet Jeffrey is an honest and clever man, and by far the best of them all.

Gavin tells us you are coming down to Annandale this winter; my only prayer is, come soon. John, who is sitting by me, hopes to see you as you pass through Edinburgh, and sends you his best regards. All the rest salute you kindly. John has been very busy all summer, and is to leave us in a week or two. Write when you have any time, at large and at length.—I am, ever your affectionate friend,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

CLXIV.—To Miss WELSH, Templand, Thornhill.

HODDAM HILL, *4th November* 1825.

. . . During my half-week's repose I was busily meditating some scheme of a *Kunstwerk* of my own! There are pictures and thoughts and feelings in me, which *shall* come out, though the Devil himself withstood it! For this time, it was Larry, not the Devil. That ungrateful untoward nag has used me like a knave. He had taken cold, and staid unmolested in his shop for three days; on the fourth I took him out to *walk* round by *the* Smithy and Hoddam Kirk. I was thinking of you and my *Kunstwerk*, when I met a carrier's cart, and my cursed beast, knowing that I was studying and had nothing but a snaffle bridle, got the bit in his teeth, whirled round at full gallop down a steep place, and had my fair person dislodged from his back and trailed some yards upon the base highway in the twinkling of an eye! *Proh pudor!* I was stunned and scratched and thoroughly bemired; I have scarcely got quit of my headache, and the tailor is mending my coat even

now. Larry's friendship and mine is at an end! . . .

CLXV.—To JOHN A. CARLYLE, Edinburgh.

HODDAM HILL, *1st December* 1825.

. . . . For some days after you left me I felt quite *harried*[1] and disconsolate; a dreary loneliness took possession of me go where I would. Time and diligence in business have now somewhat reconciled me; and I look upon your absence with a mild regret, and the hope of soon meeting you again. These separations, though painful, are not useless: they teach us to prize duly what the daily presence of makes trivial in our eyes; if we had our friends always we should never know how much we loved them. Continue to trust me, my good Jack, as of old; for though distempers and the most despicable distresses make me choleric and frequently unreasonable, I love you truly, and have no dearer wish than to see you prospering beside me. I lament to think that my power of aiding you should be so limited. . . .

[1] Despoiled.

Of our proceedings here since your departure the history may soon be told. Conceive the three most quiescent weeks of your experience in Hoddam Hill, and write *ditto ditto* as the account of these. At my return from convoying you, I found Mrs. Irving and Gavin of Bogside waiting here; they had come to take farewell of you, and missed their purpose by a few minutes. Since that night we have had no visitor, or event worth notice even here. Alick feeds his stall-cattle and pokes about doing odd jobs throughout the day, and at night comes and reads beside me. My Mother and I have our private cup of tea as usual: she spins and fights about. . . .

For myself I have gone along with exemplary industry for several weeks; translating daily my appointed task; walking and smoking at intervals, and turning neither to the right hand nor the left, as if I were a scribbling, smoking, sleeping, and dyspeptical automaton. I am through *Mute Love* and *Libussa* in Musäus: yesterday morning I began *Melechsala*, which will conclude my doings with that scorn-

ful gentleman; unless I think of adding the *Treasure-digger* to my list. . . .

CLXVI.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

HODDAM HILL, 11*th December* 1825.

. . . On computing manuscripts last night, I was surprised to find that *two* of my three volumes are almost wholly in black and white; that is, the translation part of them. I wish the thing were off my hands, that I might make an effort after some undertaking of more pith and moment. Alas! The matter lies deep and crude, if it lies at all, within my soul; and much unwearied study will be called for before I can shape it into form. Yet out it shall come, by all the powers of Dulness! And thou, my fair Guardian Saint, my kind hot-tempered Angel, my beloved scolding Wife, thou shalt help me with it, and rejoice with me in success or comfort me in failure! I do rejoice to hear you talk as you do, and as I always hoped you would, about the vulgar bubble Fame. My experience more and more confirms me in my

reprobation of it as a principle of conduct; in myself it never leads to aught but selfish discontent, and distraction of the mind from the true aims of a literary aspirant. "Fame!" says my old Goethe; "as if a man had nothing else to strive for but fame! As if the attainment of harmony in his own spirit, and the right employment of his faculties, required to be varnished over by its influences on others before it could be precious to himself!" This Goethe is a wise man. These are not his words; but they express his opinion, which I joyed to find so similar to my anticipation. You are right now, and you were wrong then: therefore love me with your whole soul; and if fame come to us, it shall be welcome; if not, we care not for it, having something far more precious than it can either give or take away. . . .

CLXVII.—To JOHN A. CARLYLE, Edinburgh.

HODDAM HILL, 15*th December* 1825.

. . . Your letter came about eight days ago, to satisfy us touching your welfare, and found us

all pretty much as you represent yourself, "in the old way," each minding his several duties, and struggling on through this rough pilgrimage of life with the usual proportion of *glar* and *Macadam* on our path, and the usual mixture of vapour and sunshine in our sky. It was very mindful in you to write so punctually; the more so as our Mother says that negligence in that social duty is a sin which easily besets you. There is still a kind of *vaakum* here in your absence; and many times at night when I lie down to bed, I think that poor Jack is sheltering himself beneath the roof of the stranger: but what can we do? One must follow the ball just where that slippery jade Fortune chooses to trundle it; and even if we could continue in a place, the place itself would crumble away from beneath us, and we should find that, take it as we may, we are foreigners and wayfarers in this Earth, and have no continuing city within its limits. *Ach, Du guter Gott, erbarme Dich unser!*

I am happy that you have betaken yourself to earnest business, the blessing, disguised as a

curse, of sublunary beings; and are diligently meditating to do quickly whatsoever your hand findeth to do. I think this *Thesis*[1] ought to answer well, and profit you both in the composition of it, and perhaps also in the foundation of a character which you may lay with it. No doubt you are thinking of it often; the more maturely the better. And be not discouraged, though at first your pen be restive, and the sheet remain white after many hours of brain-beating. It is never too good a symptom of a man that he composes easily at first. "In a crowded church," says Swift in some such words, "the doors get jammed as the audience disperses, and the outcome is slow and irregular; when there is none but the parson and the clerk, they come out rapidly and without disorder." Thus likewise it is with ideas in issuing from the secret dormitories of the mind. Æneas Rait could write a poem sooner than Virgilius Maro did.

Last time I wrote, I talked rather distantly about my journey northward: I now find that

[1] For his Doctorate.

adventure lying much closer at my door than I expected. *Musäus* is done off, three nights ago; and I find myself within a cat's leap of the end of my existing materials. . . .

CLXVIII.—To JOHN A. CARLYLE, Edinburgh.

HODDAM HILL, 24*th December* 1825.

. . . For the last two weeks I have been very idle again, having done nothing that I can recollect save writing this very pitiful *Life of Musäus*. I have been out of books, indeed; for I cannot resolve upon this *Undine* of Fouqué's, till after I have seen the *Todtenbund* in the Advocates' Library. . . .

The principal public news of this quarter is touching a sort of silver tray or epergne or waiter or some commodity of that sort which certain of the natives, instigated by "Sandy Corrie," have been presenting to Mr. Yorstoun, our venerable parson. The value of the plate is seventy guineas of gold. Nine and thirty men sat down to dinner in the Grapes Inn yesterday, at what hour I know not, His

Honour in the chair; and after a due consumpt of tough beef with wine and British spirits the tray, or whatever it is, was laid upon the genial board, and presented by *the* General,[1] with an appropriate speech, which he regretted that a day's hard hunting had prevented him from rendering more appropriate by previous meditation. Dr. Simpson also sang a bawdy song. Orations (not for the oracles) were delivered by various hands; and after protracting the feast of reason and the flow of soul till the keystone of the night had mounted over their heads, the meeting with extreme hilarity and glee, etc. etc. Will Brand, stinking with whisky like the mash-tub of the Celt, told me this to-day, while I was searching for a book in his Press and finding none.

Of domestic news, more interesting to you, I must not forget to mention the speculation for Shawbrae.[2] They have offered for the farm together with Hab Hunter's "lower Bogside"

[1] General Sharpe of Hoddam.

[2] "A 'Duke's farm' fallen vacant; which my Brother Alick pressingly wanted, but (happily) did not get."—T. C.

a rent of £230, by the hands of Alick last Wednesday. Miss Welsh has also written a strong letter to Major Creighton in their favour; so that they have considerable hope of prospering, though several others have offered and are offering. It will be decided in three weeks; till which time, for this and similar concerns, there will be nothing but unbounded conjecture and reports assuming new forms daily, and not worth listening to in any form. Our Father is in high spirits about the matter; our Mother's wishes are still keener though she is "ready to submit to His disposal;" in fact every one (not even excepting me) is anxious for an affirmative answer. . . .

CLXIX.—To his MOTHER, Hoddam Hill.

21 SALISBURY STREET, EDINBURGH,
(*6th January*), *Friday night* 1826.

. . . The first and most important piece of intelligence I have to communicate is the assurance that I am arrived in perfect safety, and proceeding in my affairs with all imaginable

prosperity. Many a time yesterday, as the wild blasts came howling round me, I thought of your dismal imaginings, and wished that you could have known how snug I was, and how little I cared about the tempest. From the road on this side of Ae-Bridge[1] I looked over my *right* shoulder, and saw Barhill and Burnswark, and the Tower of Repentance (no bigger than a moderate pepper-box) all glancing in the clear frosty breeze; and figured you out as smoking diligently and wondering "*how that poor habbletree was fenning ava;*"[2] while the "poor habbletree" was fenning as well as any one of you.

Sandy would bring up my history to the date of my parting from the hospitable home of John Greer;[3] a parting so hurried that I had not time to bid a syllable of farewell even to my Brother. I buckled up my dreadnought, and thought that a better hour would come. On the whole that dreadnought did essential

[1] On the coach road between Dumfries and Moffat.

[2] How that poor lank one is making shift at all.

[3] Carlyle's uncle by marriage, who lived near Dumfries.

service throughout the day: cased in it, I turned my back to the breeze, lit my pipe as occasion served, and sat whiffing in the most composed frame of mind, defying all the war of the elements, and knowing chiefly by report that it was "a very rough day." The poor "mason lad," who sat beside me, suffered most: the rest left us at Moffat; so that he was exposed on all sides; and being very insufficiently wrapped, he grew exceedingly cold. I pitied the poor youth, and thought of the small vein of enterprise which he was pursuing through such hardship, and of his parting from his mother, and the sorry welcome that his light purse would procure him at his journey's end. Twice I revived his fainting soul with a touch of tobacco-reek, which he inhaled with rapture from my instrument; I also now and then lent him a lap of my cloak, for which he repaid me gratefully with a bit of gingerbread; and the result was that when we reached Edinburgh about half-past four, he was *not* either dead or speechless.

CLXX.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

EDINBURGH, *21st January* 1826.

. . . Of late I have been meditating more intently than ever the project of that Literary Newspaper. Brewster is still full of it, so is the Bookseller Tait: I myself think it would pay well, but the labour is tremendous. Brewster, it seems, had engaged Lockhart to take a third share in it along with him and me; in which case I should have closed with the proposal without hesitation. Now Lockhart's preferment has overturned all that, and the matter rests where it was. I view it with wavering feelings, in which on the whole hope and desire predominate. As to the nature of the business it may be honourable or base according to the nature of its accomplishment. Did not the great Schlegel edit a literary newspaper at Jena? Did not Wieland and Schiller at Weimar? By and by the business would get lighter, and I should get help in carrying it on, and find leisure for more permanent and weighty undertakings. Brewster would have

it begun at Whitsunday or next November: in either case I should have to live in this vicinity, in my own hired house. Twice have I actually been out spying the aspects of the country; it is not an hour since I returned from Morningside, where there are houses in plenty of every quality. My plan would be to take a small one; bring in Mary and Jane to keep it for me, till I saw the promise of our enterprise, and then bring in——If she would come! would she? How do you like this form of action? Give me all your criticisms without stint or reservation. It is right that we should both be satisfied, for it is strictly an affair of the *common-weal.* Poor old common-weal! It is pity that it should not flourish better: but we will manage it and force it to flourish.

. . . . . .

My sheet is done, and the hour of four is just at hand. To-night I have to write to Goethe, and send him the copy of *Schiller* by a person that is going to London. Therefore I must on all accounts have done. There is nothing but bankruptcy going on here. Con-

stable the huge bookseller has failed; then Ballantyne (my present printer); and to-day Sir Walter Scott. Sir Walter was deeply involved with both: his debt is said to be £60,000; and it seems he takes it heavily to heart; is fallen sick and gone to bed, and refuses to be comforted. *O curas hominum! O quantum est in rebus inane!* . . .

CLXXI.—To JOHN A. CARLYLE, Edinburgh.

HODDAM HILL, *Monday* (*March* 1826).

. . . You are quite correct in your inference about Scotsbrig. Our Father returned, Thursday week, "on his fir deal," at the hind foot of Larry and Alick; after doing great business in the mighty waters. By dint of unbounded higgling, and the most consummate diplomacy, the point was achieved to complete satisfaction of the two husbandmen; and Scotsbrig, free of various "clags[1] and claims," which they had argued away, obtained for a rent of £190 (cheap, as they reckon it), in the face of many

[1] Clogs, incumbrances.

competitors. A solemn ploughing-day was held last week; and by the aid of ale and stingo, much work was effected. I rode over and saw them; a truly spirit-stirring sight. The people also are to repair the house effectually; to floor it anew, put *bun*-doors[1] on it, new windows, and so forth; and it seems "it is an excellent *shell* of a house already." Alick is ploughing at Mainhill, with two new horses; our Father is looking out for a sedate-minded Galloway to carry him "between toon and toon,"[2] and so all is running on cart-wheels with us here. Our Mother declares that there is "plenty of both *peats* and *water*;" others think "the farm is the best in Middlebie parish*in*;" our Father seems to have renewed his youth even as the eagle's age.

So, my good Jack, there will still be a home for thee here; with as true a welcome, and I hope better accommodation than ever. Therefore get thy Thesis printed, and thy graduation effected; and come home to us, with the speed

[1] *Bound* or panelled doors.

[2] Between farm and farm.

of light, in the Dumfries Diligence; and look about thee, and take breath a little, till we see what more is to be done. Tell me in the meantime when thy money is wearing scant, and we will get some more. . . .

CLXXII.—To JOHN A. CARLYLE, Edinburgh.

SCOTSBRIG,[1] *May* 1826, *Tuesday night.*

MY DEAR JACK—I got your letter on Monday; and I need not tell you that the contents of it gratified me not a little. You must have had a busy time of it lately; taking houses and getting degrees! Let us be thankful that things wear so fair an aspect and have hitherto turned out so well: I doubt not but we shall all by and by be wonderfully comfortable.

I gratified all hands here, as I myself had

[1] In May 1826 Carlyle's father had left Mainhill, and got "on another estate near by, the farm of Scotsbrig, a far better farm, where (1868) our people still are . . . where, if anywhere in the country, I from and after May 1826 must make up my mind to live. To stay there till *German Romance* was done,—clear as to that—went accordingly, and after a week of joinering resumed my stint of ten daily pages, steady as the town clock, no interruption dreaded or occurring. Had a pleasant, diligent, and interesting summer."—*Life*, i. 331.

been, by informing them of your first step towards graduation. "Not of works, lest we should boast!" the Apostle says; but really it is fair enough to go through so handsomely, without aid from any grinder or *honer* whatever, but purely by one's own resources. For the rest, doubt not that your moodiness was temporary; the slackening of the long-stretched cord, when the arrow was shot away: in a day or two the yew will tighten it again. The world is but beginning for you yet; and it is wide and broad, far beyond what you conjecture. It really is, Jack; though in hypochondriachal moments you will not believe a word of it. Come to me wherever I be, when you have finished; and take plenty of time to consider what your next step must be. While either of us has a home, the other cannot want one.

We are all got over with whole bones to this new country; and every soul of us, our Mother to begin with, much in love with it. The house is in bad order; but we hope to have it soon repaired; and for farming purposes it is an excellent "shell of a house."

Then we have a *linn* with crags and bushes, and a "fairy knowe," though no fairies that I have seen yet; and, cries our Mother, abundance of grand thready peats, and water from the brook, and no reek and no Honour[1] to pester us! To say nothing, cries our Father, of the eighteen *yeacre* of the best barley in the county; and bog-hay, adds Alick, to fatten scores of young beasts!

In fact making all allowance for newfangledness, it is a *much* better place, so far as I can judge, than any our people have yet been in; and among a far better and kindlier sort of people. I believe of a truth they will find themselves much obliged to his Honour for persecuting them away. Long life to his Honour! I myself like the place considerably better, though I have slept but ill yet, and am bilious enough. But I have mounted your old straw-hat again; and fairly betaken me to work; and should, as we say Aberdeen-awa, "be bauld to compleen." . . .

I have had a bout with this *Life of Hoff-*

[1] "His Honour," General Sharpe.

mann: it is far the worst, and has been far the most troublesome of them all. Henceforth I hope to supply M'Cork[1] regularly. Write more at large if you can next time. Alick goes to Whitsuntide fair at Dumfries to-morrow, and this should go with him; and all hands are already sound asleep. I have still another *notule* to write, which you will not fail to deliver. Good night!—I am, ever your affectionate Brother,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

Is Johnstone gone? My best wishes to him, if not.

CLXXIII.—To Miss WELSH, Haddington.

SCOTSBRIG, 18*th June* 1826.

. . . How many thousand thoughts might your last letter give rise to! We *are* it seems to begin this wonderful married life; a scene so strange to both of us, so full of hazards, and it may be of highest happiness! May the Fates award the latter; as they will, if we deserve it. . . .

[1] The printer.

I have called my task an Egyptian bondage, but that was a splenetic word, and came not from the heart but from the sore throat, for I have not been so happy for many a year as since I began this undertaking in my own strength, and in my own home: and is it not to have a *termination* which scarcely an Epic Poem could deserve? . . . The next Book I write, *another* shall help me to correct and arrange! And my fairest recompense will be the glad look of two kind black eyes through which a soul is looking that belongs to my soul for ever and ever! Let us not despond in the life of honourable toil that lies before us. . . . In labour lies health of body and of mind; in suffering and difficulty is the soil of all virtue and all wisdom. . . . Let us but be true and good, and we have nothing earthly to dread. . . .

I come to Edinburgh and to you when once this Book is done. I am about fifth way gone in the last volume; the printers are nearly done with the preceding one. It is very full of small cares, the process of manufacturing it;

but I go along contentedly: for I reckon it though a poor enough affair, yet an innocent, even a laudable one; and considerably the best sample of German genius that has yet been presented t he English. And who can blame me for a little satisfaction in the thought, that even I, poor I, here in the wolds of Annandale, am doing somewhat to instruct the thinkers of my own Country to do justice to those of another? Well, I calculate that this Book, if I am diligent, which I have cause enough to be, will be over in about five or six weeks. I come to Edinburgh then, to devise some other enterprise, to see you, and settle with you once for all the preliminaries and paraphernalia of this our magnificent Enterprise! Till then I despair of thinking any reasonable thought about this or any other matter: what with "estimates of genius," what with estimates of housekeeping, and dreams of a wicked little gypsy that haunts me, and solemn hopes and fears, and magnificent and unfathomable anticipations,—I declare my head is entirely overset, and has for the time being given up the reins of manage-

ment into other hands—those of Habit, I suppose, and Imagination. . . .

[The following letter is in reply to a friendly and cordial letter from Murray proposing to Carlyle to endeavour to secure the control and editorship of the *Scots Magazine*, and offering to assist him with "a hundred pounds or so" toward the purchase.

Constable, whose disastrous failure at the beginning of this year had brought ruin to Sir Walter Scott, had been the publisher of this venerable Magazine, which had now existed for ninety years, and his creditors had resolved to give it up, as it scarcely did more than pay for itself. Murray, with his far-sighted confidence in Carlyle's abilities, felt convinced that if he would undertake to carry it on he could not fail to make it successful. But nothing came of his suggestion and friendly urgency in the matter.]

CLXXIV.—To Rev. THOMAS MURRAY, Edinburgh (care of Mr. Carlyle, 28 Broughton Street).

SCOTSBRIG, 20*th June* 1826.

MY DEAR MURRAY—I fear I must have seemed very ungrateful; for it is too true that your most friendly and acceptable letter has never yet been answered, though, if I mistake not, I had even in words engaged to repay that act of kindness without delay. You may

believe me, want of will was not the *sole* cause. I feel as well as any one how good and helpful you are; nor is it among the least pleasing of my reflections to think that I still hold a place in your regard; that the friend of my boyhood (how rarely can this be told!) is still the friend of my riper years.

The truth of the matter is, I have been unusually busy of late months; not so busy indeed that I had not vacant minutes and even hours; but still so jostled to and fro by my avocations and immersed in the cares of them, as to be peculiarly *inept* for letter-writing, which accordingly (if this is any palliation), except in the most pressing cases, I have altogether forborne. I calculated on writing to you when this *Book* was done: but a new act of your attention forces me to take the pen sooner, if it were but to thank you for your readiness and eagerness at all times, as at this time, to do me service.

As to the practical part of the Speculation, I am wonderfully in the dark and the distance: the business of magazine-writing and the

profits and disprofits of magazine-conducting are utterly alien to my thoughts, and still more to my experience; and your project, here in my rustic solitude, stands dim, vague, and unseizable before me, think of it as I may. One thing I know well: some *periodical task* would be peculiarly useful to me in all points of view. Another thing I am not half so sure of, but yet in a case of extremity it might be esteemed as possible: that the duties of periodical Editorship, as they are discharged to various degrees of perfection, by many mortals in these Islands, might also be by dint of great effort discharged by me, inexperienced in the world, unconnected with it, and in many other respects very unfit for such an undertaking as I cannot but feel myself to be. With these two propositions, however, I can say that my convictions on this individual matter are at an end; and what steps, if any, to take in it is by no means clear to me. The purchase of the copyright, which you suggest, and with a true spirit, which I hope I shall not forget, offer to assist in, is a thing I must not

think of. I have laid out nearly all my disposable capital here in the purchase of farm and house ware; and to strip myself of daily ways and means, for an uncertain and probably distant future, were no wise policy. That therefore I must not do.

On the other hand, if in the vicissitudes of this ancient Periodical such a thing were possible, I think that on fair terms I could actually resolve to undertake the management of it. This is saying much, if you knew all my circumstances; yet such is my present view of it. It would be particularly suitable, and I would make an effort: for be it known to you (under the rose, somewhat) I actually purpose taking up my abode in Edinburgh next winter, and starting as housekeeper by my present craft.

Now the question is: Can such a project as this same Editorship be in any wise feasible? I know not, but rather think *nay*. One faint gleam of probability I see in the midst of my utter ignorance of the whole business: you speak of Black as likely to become proprietor;

now Black and Tait I believe are relations, and on a cordial footing; both honest men, also, and Tait I understand in some little flow of spirits with me at present about his *German Novelists;* from all which it strikes me as barely possible that the scheme might be worth asking one question about,—the question: Will Tait and Black, or one or other of them, purchase this Magazine, and make me the Editor thereof? If so, I shall be ready and happy to give the matter a most profound deliberation; and should their highest estimate of Editorial dues and my lowest be found capable of stretching till they meet, —to close a bargain with them, and start full speed and very shortly, in my editorial career.

With you, therefore, my good Friend, I must leave the decision. If you think it worth while, all things considered, to speak with Tait or Black (in case you know him) on the subject, do so, and let me know the result. If you think it not worth while, then there is nothing more that I see for us to do in the

matter, but to let it drop into deepest silence —till we meet in Ambrose's, whither I will venture for your sake, and drink one potion of whisky punch to the better luck of this old Scottish herring-boat, be it under the orders of Donald or the Son of Donald, or sunk in shoal water, and not sailing at all. Except Black and Tait, I recollect no bibliopolical person in Edinburgh, whom I should care for engaging with; and except on this principle, I see not that I could prudently take any hand in the concern even with them. Some hour when you have leisure, you will throw me a word on the subject; not forgetting other news of a kindred nature, of which for a great while I have been wonderfully short.

I cannot regret your stay in Edinburgh, though in the meanwhile it must be a sacrifice, for Edinburgh at this moment cannot fail to be a lively type of Purgatory. We have the heat here; but the dust and perfumes are wanting. To-day I bathed in the Solway flood, and actually my bath was tepid. Return thanks to Heaven that you are healthy,

and can front all cities and countries with impunity.

What are you busy with since you relinquished the Church History scheme? Is *Samuel Rutherford* advancing?[1] I think you have little cause to regret the failure of that other project, at least its present failure: the great labour was certain, the hope of profit with the Taits inconsiderable; and for the honour of the business, there are fifty ways as open to you for gaining it. The Cameronian subject is too much betrodden at present, and the interest of it, in its present degree, can be but transient, fading away with the first new gloss of Mr. Cleishbotham's *Tales:* but even in your present walk, there are surely ample materials to furnish you with occupation of a far more specific and original sort; occupation too, which you are happy enough not to need except for its own sake. I have often won-

[1] Murray was busy with a *Life of Rutherford*, a noted Presbyterian divine and professor in the seventeenth century, who became Rector of the University of St. Andrews. Some of his writings have been reprinted, and perhaps read, within late years in America as well as in Scotland.

dered at the meagreness and scantiness of Scottish Biography, especially that of Scottish literary men. Except Buchanan (a heavy enough gentleman, he seemed to me), we have *no* account that I could ever find of any of our ancient worthies. Who was Gawin Douglas? Who was Sir David Lindsay? Who was Baron Napier? These questions we must answer in a half-sentence. Did it never come into your head to start a regular series of Scottish (purely *Scottish*) Literary Biography? A thousand interesting things might be brought to light; touches of old manners, illustrations of history, bright sayings and doings; and no one that I know of is so fairly on the track as you for digging up these ancient treasures. Begin such a thing, and mark me down for your first subscriber. But I am babbling of things of which I know very little.

You mentioned nothing of the Newlands business to me when I saw you, nor in any of your letters. Be in no haste for a Church; and feel happy that you can do very comfortably without one, till the time come, whenever that

be. I begin to see, one is fifty times better for being heartily drilled in the school of Experience, though beaten daily for years with forty stripes save one. I used to reckon myself very wretched, and now find that no jot of my castigation could have been spared. My last year, ungainly and isolated as it was, has been the happiest of my last half-score. I am getting healthier, nay more careless of health, more conscious that if the Devil do still please to torment me, I shall have *nous* enough in me to get the weather-gage of him, and snap my fingers in his face. I have thousands of things to say, but you see——!—I am, truly yours,

T. C.

It is likely I may be in Edinburgh when this Book is published; some six weeks hence. I am in the last volume, but not far in it. The contents are of a strange enough sort, and motley as you could expect: four-fifths respectable *manufacture*, the rest perhaps *creation*. I here sign myself in full.—Your old and true friend,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

You can talk to John about this matter, if you like, for he knows all my secrets.

CLXXV.—To Miss WELSH, Templand.

SCOTSBRIG, *Monday night*
[*9th October* 1826].

"The Last Speech and *marrying* words of that unfortunate young woman Jane Baillie *Welsh*," I received on Friday morning; and truly a most delightful and swan-like melody was in them; a tenderness and warm devoted trust, worthy of such a maiden bidding farewell to the (unmarried) Earth, of which she was the fairest ornament. Dear little child! How is it that I have deserved thee; deserved a purer and nobler heart than falls to the lot of millions? I swear I will love thee with *my* whole heart, and think my life well spent if it can make thine happy.

In fine, these preliminaries are in the way towards adjustment. After some vain galloping and consultation, I have at length got that certificate which the Closeburn Session in

their sapience deem necessary; I have ordered the Proclaiming of Banns in this parish of Middlebie, and written out a note giving order for it in your parish of Closeburn. Pity, by the way, that there is no man in the Closeburn Church possessed of any little fraction of vulgar earthly logic! It might have saved me a ride to Hoddam Manse this morning (the good Yorstoun, my native parson, was away), and a most absurd application to the "glass minister" my neighbour. One would think that after fair *crying* three times through the organs of Archibald Blacklock, this certificate of celibacy would be like gilding refined gold, or adding a perfume to the violet: for would not my existing wife, in case I had one, forthwith, at the first hum from Archibald's windpipe, start up in her place, and state aloud that *she* had "objections"? But I will not quarrel with these reverend men; *laissez les faire*, they will buckle us fast enough at length, and for the *How* I care not.

Your own day, Tuesday, as was fitting, I have made mine. Jack and I will surely call

on Monday evening at Templand, most likely *after* tea; but I think it will be more commodious for all parties that we sleep at the Inn. You will not see me on Monday night? I bet two to one you will! At all events I hope you will on Tuesday; so, as Jack says, "it is much the same." . . .

Your mother will take down this note to the minister, and appoint the hour? I think it should be an early one, for we have far to go. Perhaps also she might do something towards engaging post-horses at the Inn; but I suppose there is little fear of failure in that point.

Do you know aught of wedding-gloves? I must leave all that to you; for except a vague tradition of some such thing I am profoundly ignorant concerning the whole matter. Or will you give *any? Ach du guter Gott!* Would we were off and away, three months before all these observances of the Ceremonial Law!

. . . I could say much; and what were words to the sea of thoughts that rolls through

my heart, when I feel that thou art mine, that I am thine, that henceforth we live not for ourselves but for each other! Let us pray to God that our holy purposes be not frustrated; let us trust in Him and in each other, and fear no evil that can befall us. My last blessing as a Lover is with you; this is my last letter to Jane Welsh. . . .

Good night, then, for the last time we have to part. In a week I see you, in a week you are my own. . . .

Carlyle and Miss Welsh were married, according to the practice of the Scotch Church, in the Bride's home, her grandfather's house at Templand, on the 17th October 1826.

APPENDIX

MR. FROUDE'S USE OF THE CORRESPONDENCE OF CARLYLE AND MISS WELSH

THE letters that passed between Carlyle and Miss Welsh from their first acquaintance in 1821 till their marriage in 1826 afford a view of their characters and their relations to each other, different both in particulars and in general effect from that given by Mr. Froude. His narrative is a story "founded on fact," elaborated with the art of a practised romancer, in which assertion and inference, unsupported by evidence or contradictory to it, often take the place of correct statement. Even if the form of truth be preserved, a colour not its own is given to it by the imagination of the writer.

To exhibit completely the extent and quality of the divergence of Mr. Froude's narrative from the truth, the whole story would have to be rewritten, and letters would have to be printed which, in my judgment, are too sacred for publication. But I believe that consistently with a due regard to the

nature of the source from which they are drawn, some illustrations may be given of Mr. Froude's method that will suffice to show the real character of his work, and the amount of trust that is to be reposed in it.

Near the outset of his account of the first acquaintance of Carlyle and Miss Welsh, Mr. Froude tells the story, which will be remembered by all readers of his book, of the relations between Edward Irving and Miss Welsh, of his falling in love with her after his engagement to his future wife, of her reciprocation of his feeling, of her refusal to encourage him because of the bonds by which he was held, and of the conclusion of the affair by his marriage to Miss Martin. It was an affair discreditable to Irving, and for a time it brought much suffering to Miss Welsh. Mr. Froude is aware that the telling of such a private experience requires excuse, and he justifies it by the following plea:—"I should not unveil a story so sacred in itself, and in which the public have no concern, merely to amuse their curiosity; but Mrs. Carlyle's character was profoundly affected by this early disappointment, and cannot be understood without a knowledge of it. Carlyle himself, though acquainted generally with the circumstances, never realised completely the intensity of the feeling which had been crushed."—*Life*, i. 156.

Both of these alleged grounds of excuse are

contradicted by the evidence of the letters of Miss Welsh and of Carlyle. Her letters show that her feelings for Irving, first controlled by principle and honour, soon underwent a very natural change. Her love for him was the passion of an ardent and inexperienced girl, twenty or twenty-one years old, whose character was undeveloped, and who had but an imperfect understanding of the capacities and demands of her own nature. In the years that followed upon this incident she made rapid progress in self-knowledge and in the knowledge of others, chiefly through Carlyle's influence, and she came to a more just estimate of Irving's character than she originally had formed. Irving's letters to her, his career in London, his published writings, revealed to her clear discernment his essential weakness,—his vanity, his mawkish sentimentality, his self-deception, his extravagance verging to cant in matters of religion. The contrast between his nature and Carlyle's did "affect her profoundly," and her temporary passion for Irving was succeeded by a far deeper and healthier love. "What an idiot I was for ever thinking that man so estimable," she wrote in May 1824. "My standard of men is immensely improved," she said in a letter in September of the same year.

Mr. Froude asserts, later on in his well-worked-up narration, "that an accident precipitated the relations

between himself [Carlyle] and Miss Welsh, which had seemed likely to be long protracted, and after threatening to separate them for ever, threw them more completely one upon the other" (i. 303). He then gives an account of certain somewhat officious letters written by Mrs. Montagu to Miss Welsh, concerning her feelings for Irving and her engagement to Carlyle, and of the effect produced by them. He says that he alludes to the subject only because Mrs. Carlyle "said afterwards that but for the unconscious action of a comparative stranger her engagement with Carlyle would probably never have been carried out" (i. 304, *note*). If Mrs. Carlyle ever used these words, her fancy, her memory, or her temper would seem at the moment to have played her false. The evidence afforded by her letters is ample, is convincing that Mrs. Montagu's action did not affect the result.

Mr. Froude gives a long abstract of a letter of Mrs. Montagu's, the date of which, omitted by him, was 3d July 1825, urging Miss Welsh not to marry Carlyle if she retained her old feeling for Irving, now married for some years, and he says: "With characteristic integrity, Miss Welsh on receiving this letter instantly enclosed it to Carlyle" (i. 306). This is an error. Writing to Carlyle some days after receiving it, Miss Welsh says: "I had two sheets from Mrs. Montagu the other day, trying to

prove to me that I knew nothing at all of my own heart. Mercy, how romantic she is!" In a later letter (undated, but post-marked 20th July), Mrs. Montagu urged her not to conceal from Carlyle the feeling she had once had for Irving, and this letter Miss Welsh instantly sent him, accompanying it with the declaration that she had "once passionately loved Irving," and that she had no excuse, "none at least that would bear a moment's scrutiny," for having concealed the truth. "Woe to me then, if your reason be my judge and not your love!" "Never were you so dear as at this moment when I am in danger of losing your affection, or what is still more precious to me, your respect." In his abstract of this letter Mr. Froude inserts the following sentence as if it represented words of Miss Welsh's, but there is nothing like it in what she wrote, "She who had felt herself Carlyle's superior in their late controversy, and had been able to rebuke him for selfishness, felt herself degraded and humbled in his eyes." By "their late controversy" Mr. Froude probably intends the letters that had passed between them in the preceding winter in regard to their relations to each other, but if so, and there seems to be nothing else to which he can refer, these letters do not deserve the term, and there is nothing in them to justify the statement that Miss Welsh "had been able to rebuke Carlyle for selfishness." Carlyle's

reply was the natural one: "You exaggerate this matter greatly." "Let it go to strengthen the schoolings of Experience." "You ask me to *forgive* you." "Forgiveness? Where is the living man that dare look steadfastly into his 'painted sepulchre' of a heart, and say, 'I have lived one year without committing fifty faults of a deeper dye than this'?" But he would imitate her sincerity and say to her that she did not know him, that she could not save him, that she must not let her love for him deceive her. "Come and see and determine. Let me hear you, and do you hear me. As I am, take me or refuse me: but not as I am *not*, for *this* will not and cannot come to good. God help us both, and show us both the way we ought to walk in."

Mr. Froude's remark, after giving an abstract of a part of this letter, is, "It was not in nature—it was not at least in Miss Welsh's nature—that at such a time and under such circumstances she should reconsider her resolution" (i. 308). Before she had received Carlyle's reply to her contrite confession she had written again to him, "You may be no longer mine, but I will be yours in life, in death, through all eternity." It was not necessary, she said, for her "to come and see and determine;" but she came, and after her visit at Hoddam Hill she wrote: "When shall I be so happy again as I have been in these last weeks?" "Alas, alas, the Sabbath

weeks are past and gone!" "I am yours, oh that you knew how wholly yours."

In speaking of Miss Welsh's feelings for Carlyle at an earlier period of their acquaintance, Mr. Froude says: "It amused her to see the most remarkable person that she had ever met with at her feet. His birth and position seemed to secure her against the possibility of any closer connection between them" (i. 181). The letters of Miss Welsh, which are, of course, the only source of direct information concerning her feelings toward Carlyle, afford no ground for a statement so disparaging to her sense and character as that "she was amused at seeing him at her feet." Her letters from the beginning of their correspondence are like her letters in later life, full of unique charm from their freedom, humour, and originality. She had one of the rarest of epistolary gifts, that of genuine and graceful liveliness. Her letters are instinct with her life, are the easy expressions of her moods and tempers. She does not spare Carlyle in them, she shows him her ill-humour as well as her good, but she does not wantonly trifle with him, and in the lightest of them is a quality of regard for him that indicates her admiration and respect. But few of her letters during the first eighteen months of their acquaintance remain, and among these few is a note repressing "those importunities of which I have so often had

cause to complain;" but in May 1823 she signs herself, "Your affectionate friend at all times and everywhere;" and two months later she writes, "It is a pity there is no other language of gratitude than what is in everybody's mouth. I am sure the gratitude I feel towards you is not in everybody's heart." Again, a month later, on the 19th of August, in a letter written at Templand, her grandfather's house, but emphatically dated from *Hell*, she says, "I owe you much; feelings and sentiments that ennoble my character, that give dignity, interest, and enjoyment to my life—in return I can only love you, and *that* I do from the bottom of my heart."

Of Miss Welsh's feeling as shown in this letter, Mr. Froude, not citing its words, says, "she expressed a gratitude for Carlyle's affection for her more warm than she had ever expressed before. He believed her serious, and supposed that she had promised to be his wife. She hastened to tell him, as explicitly as she could, that he had entirely mistaken her" (i. 181, 182). Miss Welsh's words surely express something more than gratitude, and Carlyle was surely not wrong to believe her serious, if mistaken in supposing she had promised to be his wife. In what sense he so supposed appears from his reply, on 31st August, which Mr. Froude does not quote: "I often ask myself," Carlyle

wrote, "'Is not all this a dream? No, thank God, it is not a dream. . . . She shall yet be mine as I am hers.' . . . In more reasonable moments, I perceive that I am very selfish and almost mad. Alas! my fate is dreary and obscure and perilous: is it fit that you whom I honour as among the fairest of God's works, whom I love more dearly than my own soul, should partake in it? No, my own best of maidens, I will not deceive you. Think of me as one that will live and die to do you service; whose good-will, if his good deeds cannot, may perhaps deserve some gratitude, but whom it is dangerous and useless to love."

Mr. Froude cites imperfectly (i. 182) a passage from Miss Welsh's answer, 16th September, in which she says that Carlyle must not mistake her, that she loves him, but will never be his wife. And citing, imperfectly also, a passage from Carlyle's reply, 18th September, Mr. Froude declares he "took his rebuke manfully." It would have been well to cite a sentence or two more, which indicate that Carlyle at least did not feel that he had received a rebuke. "I honour your wisdom and decision: you have put our concerns *on the very footing where I wished them to stand.*" The italics are his own. "Thus, then," he adds, "it stands: you love me as a sister, and will not wed; I love you in all possible senses of the word, and will not wed any more than you. Does this reassure you?"

They neither of them recognised whither such feelings as they cherished toward one another must inevitably bring them, if the fates did not interfere. In her very next letter Miss Welsh wrote, "My happiness is incomplete while you do not share it." "Stripped of the veil of poetry which your imagination spreads around me, I am so undeserving of your love! But I *shall* deserve it—*shall* be a noble woman if efforts of mine can make me so."

The nineteenth chapter of the first volume of Mr. Froude's *Life* is in great part occupied with an account of various projects considered by Carlyle and Miss Welsh, after their engagement, in regard to a place of residence, and other necessary arrangements preliminary to marriage. Mr. Froude paints Carlyle as throughout selfish, and inconsiderate of the interests of Miss Welsh and her Mother. But the letters which he prints complete or in part,[1] as well as those which he does not print, do not seem to me to support this view. "However deeply," he says, "she honoured her chosen husband, she could not hide from herself that he was selfish,—extremely selfish" (p. 337). This charge Miss Welsh may be allowed to deny for herself. "I

[1] These letters as printed by Mr. Froude abound in errors and in unmarked omissions of words, clauses, and sentences, by which their tone is sometimes greatly altered. Almost every letter in the Life which I have collated with the original is incorrectly printed, some of them grossly so.

think you nothing but what is noble and wise." "At the bottom of my heart, far from censuring, I approve of your whole conduct" (4th March 1826). "It is now five years since we first met, —five blessed years! During that period my opinion of you has never *wavered*, but gone on deliberately rising to a higher and higher degree of *regard*" (28th June 1826).

The apparent disposition to represent in an unpleasant light the character and conduct of Carlyle, as well as of Miss Welsh and her Mother, which marks Mr. Froude's narrative, is displayed in many minor disparaging statements, so made as to avoid arousing suspicion of their having little or no foundation, and arranged so as to contribute artfully to the general effect of depreciation. A single instance will suffice for illustration. On p. 337 Mr. Froude says, "For her daughter's sake she [Mrs. Welsh] was willing to make an effort to like him, and, since the marriage was to be, either to live with him, or to accept him as her son-in-law in her own house and in her own circle. . . . Mrs. Welsh had a large acquaintance. He liked none of them, and 'her visitors would neither be diminished in numbers, nor bettered in quality.' No! he must have the small house in Edinburgh; and 'the moment he was master of a house the first use he would turn it to would be to slam the door against nauseous

intruders.'" The fact is that no such plan as would appear from Mr. Froude's statement was in question. The plan was, as Miss Welsh sets it forth in a letter of 1st February 1826, that Carlyle was to hire a little house in Edinburgh, "and next November we are to—hire one within some dozen yards of it!! so that we may all live together like one family until such time as we are married, and after. I had infinite trouble in bringing my mother to give ear to this magnificent project. She was clear for giving up fortune, house-gear, everything to you and I [*sic*], and going to live with my poor old grandfather at Templand. . . . But how do you relish my plan? Should you not like to have such agreeable neighbours? We would walk together every day, and you would come and take tea with us at night. To me it seems as if the Kingdom of Heaven were at hand." To this Carlyle replied, 9th February, "What a bright project you have formed! Matured in a single night, like Jack's Bean in the Nursery Tale, and with houses in it too. Ah Jane, Jane! I fear it will never answer half so well in practice as [it] does on paper. It is impossible for two households to live as if they were one; doubly impossible (if there were degrees of impossibility) in the present circumstances. I shall never get any enjoyment of your company till you are all my own. How often have you seen me with pleasure in the presence of

others? How often with positive dissatisfaction? For your own sake I should rejoice to learn that you were settled in Edinburgh; a scene much fitter for you than your present one: but I had rather that it were with *me* than with any other. Are you sure that the number of *parties* and formal visitors would be diminished in number or bettered in quality, according to the present scheme?" [This refers to Miss Welsh's frequent complaint on this score. In one of her last letters, 8th December 1825, she had spoken of recent visitors at Haddington, and declared, "This has been a more terrible infliction than anything that befell our friend Job." Carlyle goes on] "My very heart also sickens at these things: the moment I am master of a house the first use I turn it to will be to slam the door of it on the face of nauseous intrusions [not 'intruders,' as Mr. Froude prints] of all sorts which it can exclude."

On p. 342 Mr. Froude says, "When it had been proposed that he should live with Mrs. Welsh at Haddington, he would by consenting have spared the separation of a mother from an only child, and would not perhaps have hurt his own intellect by an effort of self-denial."

No proposal to live with Mrs. Welsh at Haddington was ever made. In a letter of 16th March 1826, a part of which, including the following sentences, is printed by Mr. Froude himself (p. 343),

Miss Welsh says, "My mother, like myself, has ceased to feel any contentment in this pitiful [not 'hateful,' as printed] Haddington, and is bent on disposing of our house here as soon as may be, and hiring one elsewhere. Why should it not be the vicinity of Edinburgh after all? and why should not you live with your wife in her [not 'your,' as printed] mother's house?"

There is no foundation whatever for the statements (p. 336) that "all difficulties might be got over . . . if the family could be kept together," and that "this arrangement occurred to every one who was interested in the Welshes' welfare as the most obviously desirable." Mrs. Welsh's "consent to take Carlyle into the family . . . made Miss Welsh perfectly happy." Mrs. Welsh's consent does not appear to have ever been asked, much less to have been given to any such arrangement. In a part of Miss Welsh's letter of 16th March, not quoted by Mr. Froude, she says, "I will propose the thing to my Mother," that is, the project that they should all live together, in case Carlyle should approve it. He wisely did not approve it. Mr. Froude's account of the whole matter is a tissue of confusion and misrepresentation.

One more example of Mr. Froude's method, and I have done. The following passage is from p. 358. It refers to arrangements for the journey to Edinburgh after the wedding. "Carlyle, thrifty

always, considered it might be expedient to 'take seats in the coach from Dumfries.' The coach would be safer than a carriage, more certain of arriving, etc. So nervous was he, too, that he wished his brother John to accompany them on their journey—at least part of the way."

What foundation this insinuation of mean and tasteless thrift on Carlyle's part, and of silly nervousness, possesses, may be seen from the following extracts from a letter of Carlyle's of 19th September. "One other most humble care is whether we can calculate on getting post horses and chaises all the way to Edinburgh without danger of let, or [if] it would not be better to take seats in the coach for some part of it? In this matter I suppose you can give me no light: perhaps your mother might. At all events tell me your *taste* in the business, for the coach *is* sure if the other is not." . . . "John and I will come up to Glendinning's Inn the night before; he may ride with us the first stage if you like; then come back with the chaise, and return home on the back of Larry, richer by one *sister* (in relations) than he ever was. Poor Jack!"

Such is the treatment that the most sacred parts of the lives of Carlyle and his wife receive at the hands of his trusted biographer! There is no need, I believe, to speak of it in the terms it deserves.

The lives of Carlyle and his wife are not represented as they were, in this book of Mr. Froude's. There was much that was sorrowful in their experience; much that was sad in their relations to each other. Their mutual love did not make them happy, did not supply them with the self-control required for happiness. Their faults often prevailed against their love, and yet "with a thousand faults they were both," as Carlyle said to Miss Welsh (25th May 1823), "true-hearted people." And through all the dark vicissitudes of life love did not desert them. Blame each of them as one may for carelessness, hardness, bitterness, in the course of the years, one reads their lives wholly wrong unless he read in them that the love that had united them was beyond the power of fate and fault to ruin utterly, that more permanent than aught else it abided in the heart of each, and that in what they were to each other it remained the unalterable element.

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